

THE INDEPENDENT

Wednesday 1 October 1997 (IR50p) 45p No 3,416

16.17/FASHION

Highlights from a great week for London style



21/COMMENT

Grow old disgracefully says Suzanne Moore

TODAY'S NEWS

Psychiatrists' row over recovered memory

Recovered memories of sexual abuse – so-called recovered memory syndrome – “have no basis in reality”, according to a committee of the Royal College of Psychiatrists. But its report has proved so inflammatory that it will not be published under the college's name; psychiatrists remain angrily divided over the issue. Page 3

Gay court victory

A lesbian couple yesterday won a ruling from the European Court that could transform employers' behaviour towards all of Europe's 35 million gay men and lesbian women. The court decided that South West Trains had discriminated against their employee by denying a rail pass for her partner – in effect confirming that gay partners should be treated in the same way as heterosexual partners. Page 8

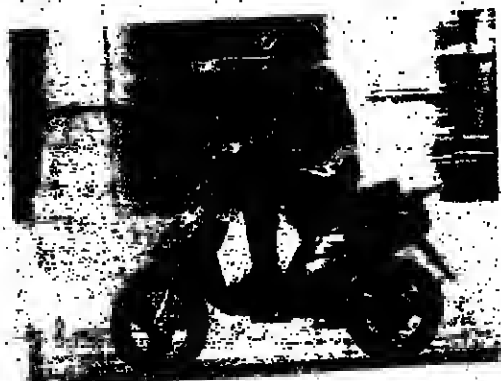
Unsupervised ops

Trainee doctors and anaesthetists are performing operations unsupervised. The patients are at most risk when being operated on in evening and early morning surgery, when senior staff are less likely to be around the hospital. Page 5

AND WELCOME...

Welcome to all those new readers who have arrived with the Independent since we re-fashioned the paper in its new form. Evidently those who tried it in the first week liked what they saw. Last week we estimate that there were nearly 90,000 more people reading the Independent on average each day than before the change. Stick around: we are confident you will grow to like it even more.

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Radical, Tony, you may be. But what kind of radical, exactly?



An ambition to change Britain into a radical beacon for the 21st century was raised by Tony Blair in Brighton yesterday. But what does radical mean to him? Anthony Bevis, Political Editor, sifts through the rhetoric in search of definition.

Compassion with a hard edge, high ideals and hard choices were promised in the first conference speech from a Labour Prime Minister since 1978.

Mr Blair said he wanted a government “not popular for one time, but remembered for all time.”

“Not just a better government than the Tories, but one of the great, radical, reforming governments of British history.”

“Today I say to the British people: the chains of mediocrity have been broken, the tired days are behind us, we are free to excel once more,” he told the packed hall, with standing room only and numerous overspills.

“We are free to build that model 21st-century nation, to become that beacon to the world.”

But beyond that call for a new patriotism, the substance of the speech – the hard promises backed by hard cash – was more careful, if not cautious, and more manageable.

On education, the Prime Minister said he wanted, “the high ideal of the best schools in the world. Reached through hard choices.”

That meant that by 2002 – the year of the next general election – all 32,000 schools in Britain would have modern computers; 10,000 schools would have benefited from a £2bn repair and equipment programme; four out of every five 11-year-olds should have hit a new literacy target; and an extra 500,000 students would have gone into higher and further education.

But the small print of a Whitehall press brief suggested that the £2bn for repairs was based on the Budget commitment of £1.3bn from the windfall tax – boosted by the “hope” that other, private sources would contribute £700m.

Mr Blair's commitment on welfare was even less clear-cut, although he did say he

would not rest “until all our children live in a Britain where no child goes hungry, the young are employed, and the old are cherished, valued to the end of their days”.

The underlying principle of the welfare reform package to be offered in a Green Paper early next year would appear to be more self-provision – without tax increases, but freeing more money for education and health.

“It means getting money out of social failure and into schools, into hospitals where we want to see it,” Mr Blair said, adding: “We need a modern welfare that

INSIDE

“The Prime Minister articulated his ambition of a radically rethought Britain yesterday. It's a brave one, and he evidently means what he says, but now he has to make it real”
Leading article, page 20

Brighton Sketch by David Aaronovitch, page 6

From the Floor, by Cherry Mostesha, page 7

“The vision Blair presented was a Labour one of a compassionate, socially inclusive Britain. The price he exacted was that traditional Labour institutions will no longer be assumed to be the vehicles for achieving it”
Donald Macintyre, page 21

means a better balance between public and private money.”

On health, he said: “The NHS was a beacon to the world in 1948. I want it to be so again. It will always be safe with us. I want it to be better with us.”

Money was not the only problem with healthcare and from next April the Government would be setting up 10 “specialty-funded” Health Action Zones to experiment with new ideas for the deliv-

ery of healthcare. The Department of Health said: “This will involve... re-shaping the way services are organised to meet new needs.”

While some Lottery money could be made available, along with private finance, for the zone pilots, the health department added: “They will be funded in the main from making the existing budgets... work harder.”

In spite of prior spin, in the weekend newspapers, which built up Mr Blair's commitment to tackle global warming as one of the big issues of the speech, he devoted just one paragraph to it, referring delegates to a report by the Government's Chief Scientific Adviser, Sir Robert May, being published in London.

He gave no detail, but urged the delegates to “read it and you will see why I am so passionate in my commitment to action”. The commitment was not specified.

The most vague section of the speech was about an issue that deeply concerns the Prime Minister – the family.

“We cannot say we want a strong and secure society when we ignore its very foundation: family life,” he told delegates.

Speaking as a “modern man”, Mr Blair said the modern crisis was producing nearly 100,000 teenage pregnancies a year; children growing up without role models; more and deeper poverty; more crime; more truancy; “and above all more unhappiness”.

Mr Blair's answer was to set up a Cabinet committee, under the Home Secretary Jack Straw, which would explore every policy, every initiative, every avenue – to see how families could be strengthened.

But in the end, Mr Blair warned, the “quiet revolution” he was promising for education, health and welfare meant not only hard choices, but involvement.

“We need to bring a change, too, in the way we treat each other,” he said. “I tell you, a decent society is not based on rights. It is based on duty. Our duty to each other. To all should be given opportunity; from all responsibility demanded.”

Mr Blair's adaptation of the old Marxist dictum, “From each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs”, was an appropriate benchmark for the change he has wrought in the Labour Party. Next, he was saying, he wanted to change Britain. And after that, the world.

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Would you buy shares in a rock star? Capitalising on the success of David Bowie's pioneering bond sale, Nomura Securities has set out to find more rockers willing to turn rebellion into money.

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Mo Mowlam, the Northern Ireland Secretary is ready to scrap Northern Ireland's widely hated internment laws.

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Trainee doctors and anaesthetists are being allowed to perform operations without supervision.

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The Prime Minister says that Britain will cut its emissions of damaging carbon dioxide gas by 20 per cent by 2010 to help save the earth's climate from catastrophic climate change. Is he serious, can he deliver? Our science and environment correspondents investigate.

13/HOLOCAUST

The French Catholic church yesterday apologised, to God and to the Jewish people, for its failure to speak out against the persecution of Jews by the Vichy regime during the Second World War.

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Stage and screen are going wild about Oscar Wilde.

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The good, the bad and the ugly from London Fashion Week

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Women should be allowed to grow old disgracefully, says Suzanne Moore

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Jobs in Britain will be lost as Shell plans a big restructuring of its petrol retailing operation.

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TOURIST RATES

Australia (dollars)	2.162	Japan (yen)	192.88
Austria (schillings)	19.42	Malta (lira)	0.609
Belgium (francs)	57.09	Netherlands (guldens)	3.110
Canada (\$)	2.17	Norway (kroner)	11.17
Cyprus (pounds)	3.038	Portugal (escudos)	279.83
Denmark (kroner)	10.59	Spain (pesetas)	232.44
France (francs)	9.26	Sweden (kroner)	11.94
Germany (marks)	2.77	Switzerland (francs)	2.28
Greece (drachmas)	448.32	Turkey (lira)	2654
Hong Kong (\$)	12.09	USA (\$)	1.57
Ireland (pounds)	1.07		
Italy (lira)	272		

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PEOPLE



Heseltine to give Tory party conference a miss

Michael Heseltine has fuelled speculation that he may stand down from the Commons, after telling Lord Parkinson he will not attend next week's party conference in Blackpool, to make way for a "new generation" at the top.

Few speakers could have rallied the Conservatives like Mr Heseltine, and their new leader, William Hague, could have used all the help he could get to lift his troops after their election defeat. If it is Mr Heseltine's last appearance on the conference podium, it marks the end of an era of barnstorming performances. The last time he was in Blackpool, he marched on to the platform to poke fun at Labour for shifting to the "left, left, left" and did PT exercises to show he was fit after his first heart attack. His floppy blond quiff was a conference favourite for the party faithful, who forgave him for bringing down the "Iron Lady". But next week he

will not be there and the Winter Gardens, Blackpool, will not seem the same without him. The former deputy prime minister and first secretary told Lord Parkinson, the party chairman, he would not be around because of business commitments. However, the party will feel that someone of "Hezza's" appeal could have rearranged his diary to be there.

A party source said: "He spoke to Lord Parkinson saying...there was a new generation coming up. They are young. The shadow cabinet have got other things to do." Another source denied Mr Heseltine's absence was a snub to Mr Hague, Mr Heseltine recently told friends he may take life easier but did not intend standing down from his Henley seat until the next election. That will not stop speculation that he could be prepared to make way for Chris Patten, former governor of Hong Kong, to return to Parliament, to bolster or replace Mr Hague.

Academic in dust-up over book 'based on a hoax'

David Selbourne, philosopher and former Oxford academic who had a public falling-out with Ruskin College a decade ago, is at odds with the academic establishment again, this time in the US.

Little Brown, has postponed publication of his latest book, *The City of Light*, after scholars said they thought it was based on a hoax. The book is his translation of a manuscript his publishers and the *New York Times* presented as likely to rewrite history - if genuine. An account of a visit to China by Jacob d'Ancona, a 13th-century Italian, it was said to predate Marco Polo's account of his journey to China by four years.

But pre-publication publicity brought a chorus of dismissal from US sinologists. Jonathan Spence, a historian at Yale, said that when he reviewed the book he would dismiss it as a fake, arguing in particular that descriptions of daily life, philosophical concepts and sexual practices did not accord with what is known of the times.

Selbourne, who lives in Italy, says he was allowed to see the manuscript and publish his translated edition of it only on condition that he did not show the original text to anyone else or divulge any information about its owner. This, according to his critics, leaves a big question-mark over its authenticity.

- Mary Dejevsky

Moir Wallace, private secretary to Tony Blair and formerly to John Major, has been chosen to head up the Government's new social-exclusion unit.

The taskforce, announced by Peter Mandelson, Minister without Portfolio, in August, will work across departments and aims to develop policies to prevent social problems as well as combating deprivation.

Ms Wallace, 36, a graduate of Cambridge and a former Kennedy scholar at Harvard, is at present number three in the Prime Minister's private office in a role which includes Treasury, education, social security and trade and industry matters.

A high-flying career civil servant, she held the same post under Mr Major when he was at Number 10 and was also private secretary for Mr Major and Nigel Lawson when they were chancellors, working on public spending. She was made OBE in Mr Major's resignation honours.

She is said to see the core of the job as "making government work better" while providing a channel to Whitehall for people with successful local projects who could help identify ways in which government policies could be made to gel better.

- Glenda Cooper

Blair secretary to head new poverty unit

UPDATE

HEALTH

Death rate of young men rises

Men in their late 20s and 30s are failing to share in a general improvement in health and life expectancy, the Government's Chief Medical Officer said yesterday.

Death rates among men aged 25 to 39 are increasing, while those among all other age groups are decreasing, chiefly because of an increase in violence, drinking and suicide, Sir Kenneth Calman said. Deaths related to drug misuse and accidental poisoning have increased almost sixfold among men aged 40-44 since 1986.

Launching his annual report *On the State of the Public Health 1996*, Sir Kenneth said that although the general health of the population was improving there remained big inequalities between social classes and a continuing excess of deaths in the winter. The report focuses on problems faced by the 7.3 million people with a disability aged over 10 and highlights the increasing attention being paid to domestic violence, which accounts for one in four of all assaults and has serious consequences for children as well as imposing a heavy burden on hospital accident and emergency departments. Sir Kenneth said medical and other staff dealing with women injured in domestic violence often failed to pick up what was going on.

- Jeremy Laurence

MEDIA

Diana coverage set record

The death of Diana, Princess of Wales was the subject of more newspaper coverage than even the most dramatic events of the Second World War and set a media record, according to a press-cuttings agency.

The assassination of President John Kennedy and shooting of John Lennon "pale into insignificance" in terms of column inches in the press, said Durrants Press Cuttings, which monitors 200,000 newspapers and magazines a year. No other subject in the agency's archives, which go back to 1880, compared with the coverage devoted to Diana's death, funeral and subsequent stories. "The nearest one can get to this level of media exposure takes us back to the 1940s and the Second World War," said the Durrants managing director, Tony Law. "But while the war was an ongoing focus for Britain's newspapers, not even the major events of the period - the outbreak of war, Dunkirk, VE-Day - achieved anywhere near the press coverage devoted to Diana." Royal births, weddings and deaths of the 20th century achieved only a small fraction of the press attention, text

BROADCASTING

TV viewers condemn violence

Nearly two in three television viewers believe there is too much violence on the small screen, a report said yesterday.

Programmes such as *The Bill*, *Silent Witness*, and *Thief Takers* and films like *Reservoir Dogs* contained unacceptable levels of violence, according to 64 per cent of people polled by the Broadcasting Standards Commission. But its findings were disputed by the BBC and ITV.

The Broadcasting Standards Commission report suggested viewers had become far more sensitive to violence since the Dunblane massacre. It said 62 per cent of those polled said the one issue causing them most concern was TV violence in 1996. The figure was 55 per cent in 1995, while 57 per cent said at least one programme a fortnight contained unjustified bad language, explicit sex or violence. Men were more likely to become concerned about a programme than women, with the less well-off reporting more incidents causing concern than those in social groups A and B.

ADVERTISING

Ageist employers up to old tricks

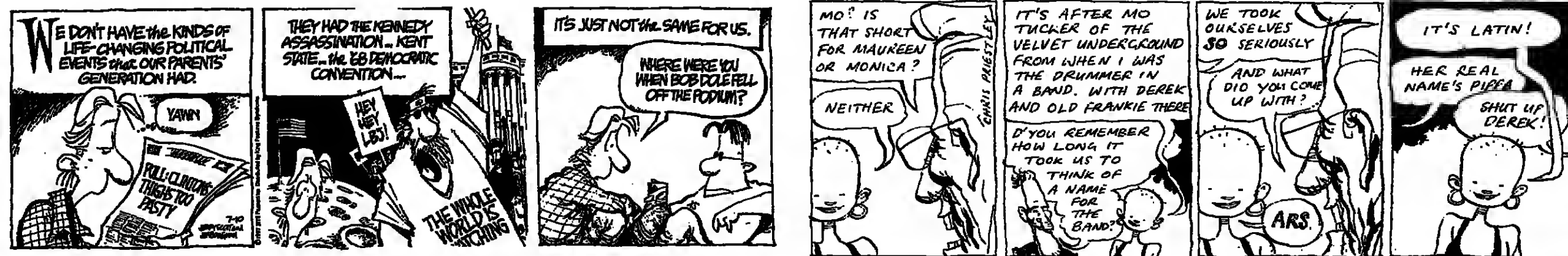
The number of ageist job advertisements has fallen but employers are still excluding older people by using coded language, a survey has revealed. The three-month survey of more than 8,000 advertisements showed the number stipulating age limit had halved over the past two years to 6 per cent but many companies are using phrases such as "a young team" or "a young outlook" to signal the preferred age of applicants.

Studies in the 1980s found 30-42 per cent of adverts contained age limits, but since then employers have been told it is not acceptable to discriminate on the basis of age. However, as yet there are no official regulations governing job adverts. In the 10 years to 1997 the number of men aged 40-64 and women aged 40-59 who were unemployed or classed as economically inactive rose by 79,000 to 4.2 million. Kate Watson-Smyth

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DELL

Abuse claims may be all in the mind

A new report on diagnosing childhood sexual abuse has split the Royal College of Psychiatrists. The study, which says false memories can be planted in patients' mind, has caused a furious row.

Glenda Cooper, Social Affairs Correspondent, investigates.

The question of whether forgotten memories of childhood sexual abuse can be brought back with the aid of therapy has been bitterly contested ever since the first cases emerged in the United States over the past decade.

Now a new committee set up by the Royal College of Psychiatrists has said that many recovered memories of sexual abuse "have no basis in reality". It has provoked such intense anger amongst college members that it will not be published under the college's name.

The college is split between those who are sceptical that recovered memories have their basis in fact and those with a conviction that the memories of disturbed patients must be both believed and followed up.

One member of the working party which wrote the report has refused to put his name to it. Another source said the original report was so "inflammatory" that it read like "the British False Memory Society's newsletter".

Many accused parents claim their family lives have been destroyed by fantasies planted by unscrupulous therapists in their children's minds. In one case, Gary Ramona, a Californian business executive, won \$335,000 compensation after his daughter who was undergoing regression therapy accused him of rape.

But those who say they have been abused, such as the American comedienne Roseanne Barr, argue that if it is possible for war victims to block out horrific events, why should this not be true of sexual abuse?

The report, which will be published under the names of the working party instead of the college is blunt - false memories can be planted in patients' minds by psychiatrists. "It's possible to have entirely false memories not based on events in reality," said the chairman of the working party, Professor Sydney Brandon, yesterday. "This



A Royal College of Psychiatry working party has reported 'it's possible to have entirely false memories not based on events in reality'. Photograph: Philip Meech

has not been stated unequivocally in the past."

But the forensic, developmental and psychotherapy committees in particular refused to accept its findings. They also raised questions over two members' links to the British False Memory Society, which represents parents who say they have been wrongly accused.

As a result, only a set of nine guidelines have been agreed by the college. The recommendations say that the college recognises the "severity and significance" of child

sexual abuse and say that the welfare of the patient should be the first concern.

It warns psychiatrists off using "memory recovery techniques" such as hypnosis, regression, guided imagery and literal dream interpretation saying there is "no evidence" such techniques can reveal or elaborate factual information about abuse. "Forceful" or "persuasive" interviewing techniques are also not acceptable.

Outside the consulting room, psychiatrists should not encourage or discourage legal action but if the case is reported psy-

chiatrists should be prepared to state clearly if the grounds of the action are inadequate or unreasonable.

The president of the college, Dr Robert Kendell, said that it was "not surprising" that the college had not been able to produce a report which they all agreed on. "The college decided it would be silly to publish a report under the name of the college which some members of college wished to disassociate themselves from," he said.

A spokeswoman for the British False Memory Society said the recommendations

were a "first step towards protecting future patients and their families from the utter devastation that a false allegation of childhood sexual abuse can bring."

But Marjorie Orr, of Accuracy About Abuse, said that the recommendations "would do damage... because it reinforces the culture of disbelief for abuse survivors whether they have never forgotten their abuse as well as those who have forgotten," she said. "There is a huge problem with psychiatrists because they do not listen to the abuse survivors."

'You can do nothing when you're wrongly accused. No one wants to know'

"I thought 'Is this real? Am I awake?'" said Sheila the day her son-in-law came round to tell her and her husband Joe that their only daughter said that she remembered being abused by them.

More than three years later the couple have not seen their only daughter or their grandchildren since. In the last few weeks Sheila's mother has become terminally ill but their daughter still refuses to get in touch.

Joe and Sheila's daughter first went for counselling after she suffered post-natal depression following the birth of her second child. She was training to be a nurse and she and her husband had considerable financial problems. It was a difficult time.

But after five years of therapy she began to accuse those around her of abuse -

culminating in accusations against her parents. Her husband came round to tell them. "I was horrified. I just couldn't believe it. I immediately thought she must be mentally ill," said Sheila. We had been so close. "Not a day went past when she didn't pop in for a coffee," added Joe.

Sheila's mother has also been cut off by her granddaughter, so she cannot see her great grandchildren. "We've made sure that [our daughter] knows she's ill but she's refusing to get in touch. She hasn't even sent a get-well card," says Joe. Police and social services investigated the allegations but, said the couple, found no evidence of abuse. The family are now considering suing their daughter's therapist. "You can do nothing if you are falsely accused," said Joe. "No one wants to know."

They welcomed the guidelines published today. "I'm a little bit disappointed that there seems to have been such an argument by the psychiatrists. And I don't think they go far enough. I think a law should be passed meaning any case of recovered memory should be investigated properly," said Joe.

"I think they should accept the fact and talk to people like us before they make reports. But then psychiatrists are only part of the problem. We need to look at the psychologists and therapists as well."

For them they feel it is too late and nothing can turn back the clock. "I can't think of anything worse than has happened to us," said Sheila. "It's the end of the family. We are virtually on our own."

— Glenda Cooper



Joe and Sheila are considering suing the therapist with whom their daughter said she had recovered memory of child abuse. Photograph: Tim Smith/Guzelian

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'Traumatised' McAliskey to attend court

Her family claims she is suffering from post-traumatic stress, and she has an eating disorder. But bomb suspect Roisin McAliskey has been told she must be in court to hear her extradition case.

Steve Boggan reports

A magistrate yesterday ordered the terrorist suspect Roisin McAliskey to be brought to his court from her hospital sickbed so he could extradite her to Germany.

Nicholas Evans, sitting at Bow Street Magistrates' Court in London, said he was prepared to grant an extradition application from the German government, but only if Ms McAliskey, 25, were present.

His ruling angered her supporters and appeared to astonish lawyers acting for both sides. Edward Fitzgerald QC, representing Ms McAliskey, and James Lewis, for the Germans, argued that an order committing her to be extradited could be granted in her absence after psychiatrists ruled she was too ill to attend.

She was arrested more than 10 months ago on attempted murder and conspiracy charges after a mortar bomb attack on the Quebec barracks in Osnabruck in June 1996 in which no one was injured. Despite being heavily pregnant and suffering from an eating disorder, she was classified as a category A high-risk prisoner and was granted conditional and highly restrictive bail only days before giving birth to her daughter, Loionir, in May.

Both sides asked Mr Evans to grant an order yesterday so the case could move on to the

High Court, which can overrule extradition in certain circumstances, or to Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, who also has the power to prevent extradition if he were satisfied that the case against Ms McAliskey were flawed. She has always denied the charges and insists she has never visited Germany.

Yesterday, Mr Lewis, acting for the Germans, said he accepted that Ms McAliskey was too ill to attend. But Mr Evans said: "I am not prepared to commit her in her absence". He adjourned the hearing to 9 October, when he said he would take "just five minutes" to make his ruling with Ms McAliskey present.

After the hearing, her mother, Bernadette McAliskey, the former nationalist MP, said doctors had warned that attendance would have a terrible effect on her daughter's health. She is suffering from symptoms of post-traumatic stress following her arrest and detention in prison while pregnant.

"We wanted this to move on up through the courts so we could argue there was no *prima facie* case against her," she said. "Her doctors have told me that her recovery would take 18 months... more stress like this will set her right back and I won't allow it."

Paul May of the Britain and Ireland Human Rights Centre said her lawyers had proof that she was in Northern Ireland throughout the period the German authorities claim she was there. Her presence at a cottage from which the bombing raid was launched has also been put in doubt. Annaliese Schmidt, whose husband owns the cottage, has told investigators that Ms McAliskey was not the woman known as Beth - who stayed there before the bombing.



End of the line: The Canberra sailing into Southampton yesterday after its final P&O voyage. The liner, used to ferry troops to the Falklands, is considered outdated. No decision has been taken on its future. Photograph: Roy Riley

Glum shooters hand over weapons

Almost all the 160,000 registered weapons covered by the Government's ban on handguns had been handed in before last night's deadline, writes Ian Burrell.

A succession of glum-faced shooters arrived at police stations across Britain yesterday to be relieved of their prized firearms. Many offered up their weapons only hours before the midnight deadline when the possession of a pistol over .22 calibre became a criminal offence punishable by up to 10 years in jail.

Police, who have been co-

ordinating the retrieval of the handguns since the passage of the Firearms (Amendment) Act in February, were delighted with the response.

"Very few weapons are outstanding. We think we can collect them all by the midnight deadline," said a spokesman for the Avon and Somerset force.

With some bitterness, the leaders of the pro-gun lobby explained that shooters were law-abiding citizens who, though disappointed, would comply with the legislation.

They said gun-related crime was being allowed to

run out of control in some cities, while lawful people had been scapegoated for Thomas Hamilton's massacre of 16 children and their teacher in Dunblane in March last year.

Paul Johnson, a former police officer and secretary of the British Shooting Sports Council, said: "This has illustrated the way that this country has moved into governance by emotion."

"It's not just us, it's single mothers, it's people out of work. We were the first of a series of minority groups who are going to be used for

media and political ends over the next few years."

Alun Michael, home office minister, had sympathy for the shooters over the loss of their sport, but was pleased they had acted law-abidingly.

More than 600,000 illegal guns have been surrendered in Australia as the deadline passed yesterday for the country's gun buy-back scheme, writes Robert Milliken in Sydney. The trigger for the scheme was the massacre by Martin Bryant of 35 people at Port Arthur in Tasmania in April last year.

European Court upholds British beef ban

Britain's beef industry, reeling from the fallout from new research confirming that meat contaminated by BSE causes Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease in humans, suffered a further blow yesterday when the Gov-

ernment failed to clear the first round of its bid to have the EU ban on UK beef exports declared illegal.

The European Court's Advocate General, delivering an advisory opinion to help

the full 15-member court reach a decision later in the year, said the ban imposed by Brussels 18 months ago was valid.

Although the 24 page opinion from Advocate-General Giuseppe Tesaro is not legally binding and could theoretically be ignored by the court, this is unlikely to happen.

Judge Tesaro upheld the European Commission's decision to impose a worldwide ban on UK beef and cattle exports on the grounds that its aim was to minimise any potential health risks and to reduce widespread consumer alarm.

"The gravity of BSE and

the danger of its transmissibility to man constituted a real risk which vindicates the decision," the judge said.

In its challenge to the ban, Britain, backed by the National Farmers' Union, is seeking to have the trade embargo annulled, submitting that the European Commission exceeded its powers.

But rejecting this argument, Judge Tesaro left the full court in no doubt that it was not only within the Commission's wide veterinary powers to order a ban but that it has a clear duty to protect human health. — Katherine Butler

Paedophiles advertise children on Internet for sex swaps

Paedophiles are advertising their children on the Internet to take part in "sex swaps" with other abusers, researchers have discovered.

Up to 27,000 people are involved in daily exchanges of photographs of child sex, some taken of toddlers on the beach, and paedophile information on the electronic highway.

The huge scale and explicitness of the material, which is distributed globally, has shocked police and researchers.

Some of the paedophiles are using "underground" network systems that are harder to access. Material displayed on this outlet includes an advert from a paedophile couple who are offering their daughter - aged eight to 12 - in exchange with a similar aged girl for sexual use. The advertisement is not believed to be an isolated case.

The existence of the vice rings were disclosed yesterday at the British Psychological Society's criminological and legal division's annual conference in Cambridge, but because of the extreme sensitivity of the material no details can be published.

— Jason Bennett, Crime Correspondent

Churches warn on school plan

Sweeping proposals for a new schools framework could shatter the 50-year-old partnership between Church and state in education, churches warned ministers yesterday.

In separate responses to the Government's education White Paper, *Excellence in Schools*, the Church of England, the Methodist Church and the Catholic Education Service all expressed strong reservations over the plans to divide state schools into three new categories - community, foundation or aided.

Aided status is the category intended to appeal to voluntary aided church schools, but churches' overall majorities on those governing bodies would be reduced from two or three to one. The move, according to the Catholic Education Service "seriously weakens the link between our schools and the Catholic community".

The churches also fear the proposals could deny governing bodies control over admissions. Schools might even decide to abandon formal links with churches entirely.

St Saviour's Infant School, Great Sutton, South Wirral, said yesterday that its decision to reclaim a classroom from the local playgroup was not the result of an expanded reception class caused by nursery vouchers. (The Independent 29 September). The room was being used to reduce class sizes for six and seven-year-olds.

— Lucy Ward, Education Correspondent

Bull bars may be banned

The Government is to consider banning bull bars from motor vehicles even if that involves circumventing European legislation.

Speaking at a fringe meeting at the Labour conference in Brighton, Baroness Hayman, transport minister, said yesterday that the Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions will issue a consultation paper later this week setting out the options on how bull bars could be banned.

Ministers have lost patience with the slow pace of European legislation on the subject which has become bogged down in the Brussels bureaucracy. The previous government argued that it would be impossible for the UK to legislate on its own because regulations concerning the construction and use of vehicles is a European matter.

— Christian Wolmar

Bailiffs clear animal protesters

Bailiffs and police yesterday cleared animal rights demonstrators from a protest camp outside a controversial chemical research centre. More than 100 police were at Huntingdon Life Sciences near Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire, to help staff working for the High Sheriff of Cambridgeshire.

About 20 demonstrators had occupied a small area of woodland near the main gate. Some chained themselves to concrete blocks embedded in the ground. Others tied themselves to an oak tree and at least one hid in a tunnel. The police officer overseeing the operation said demonstrators had not been abusive or violent. A number of people had been arrested for obstruction.

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هكذا من الأصل

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Wall Street and Hollywood cash in on the rock of ages

It has been eight months since David Bowie pocketed \$55m in a pioneering bond sale backed by future earnings from his hit records. Now all of Wall Street is screaming 'Let's Dance' as deal-makers spy a whole new financial market based on rock'n'roll entertainers. David Usborne feels the heat.

It is Monday at The House of Blues, a night club in West Hollywood favoured by the well-heeled with a taste for rock'n'roll and cocktails in not-too-sunny surroundings. The clientele, however, is even more starch-collared than usual. They are the financial managers of some of our best known entertainment stars. Milling amongst them is a delegation from Nomura Securities.

Soon, the lights go up and, bass guitar swinging, Ozzy Osbourne swags onto the stage. To whoops and applause he accompanies the less than legendary crooner, Ethan Pennier, in a duet rendition of 'Born to be Wild'.

Not familiar with the recordings of Ethan Pennier? You are not alone, because Mr Pennier is better known for activities other than singing. He is the President of Nomura Asset Capital Corp, a subsidiary of New York-based Nomura Securities, itself an arm of the giant Nomura Bank of Japan.

Mr Pennier and his associates were in West Hollywood on a high-stakes mission: to seek out real stars of the music universe who may be willing to emulate a ground-breaking bond deal struck by David Bowie last February.

Few needed educating on the "Bowie bond" affair. With

help from a white-shoe investment bank in Manhattan named Fehnestock & Co, Bowie engineered a package which at the time stunned the music and financial community alike. He raised \$55m for himself (£33m) through the issue of bonds which were sold to Prudential Insurance.

The concept for the Bowie bonds was straightforward. While Bowie had not had a hit since the release of "Let's Dance" 10 years ago, he was assured a steady stream of income from the earnings from his still-popular songs. That flow of money guaranteed the

bonds. In buying them, Prudential meanwhile was promised a fixed interest rate of 7.9 per cent.

Thus, with Wall Street's help, Bowie won access overnight to wealth that would otherwise have dribbled in over a period of years. It was a coup that turned many of his peers in the music and entertainment business a deep shade of green. And other banks are hoping to tap that envy.

Bear Stearns, another leader of the Wall Street pack, has also announced plans to package so-called entertainment bonds. While Nomura is most inter-

ested in buying the bonds for its own profit - it has established a \$1bn fund for that purpose - Bear Stearns hopes to sell them on to third investors, taking a hefty fee along the way.

The prospects look good. Bowie is only one of a large reservoir of acts that have shown themselves to have had unexpected longevity. The Rolling Stones, who have just embarked on another world tour and have similar hopes of long-term earnings, have been rumoured to be negotiating a similar deal.

Selling such bonds is made easier by booming market for the music, however ancient, of performers like Bowie, the Stones or Fleetwood Mac in far away markets like China and South-east Asia.

It also helps that new technology, such as the switch from vinyl to CD discs, offers further increments in earnings for such acts.

The audience at The House of Blues seemed to like the idea. "I think it's kind of the future," declared Ron Stone, who represents Bonnie Raitt and Tracy Chapman. "I think that now for us it's connecting and making sense. I've got to do my homework and see how much money we're talking about. If it's sizeable, then yes, I'll go to my clients."

The notion of tapping earnings from music and recording royalties long before they actually come in is appealing in many regards. It can help with tax, for instance by allowing heirs to pay inheritance taxes without having to liquidate inherited assets. Such large amounts of money can also help fund new projects such as tours and films.

And Mr Pennier, microphone discarded, was equally enthusiastic. "We have the potential in many ways of defining the way business is financed," he said on Monday.

WHO'S NEXT FOR BOWIE BONDS



It isn't necessary to be a mega-star to follow in the financial footsteps of David Bowie; but it helps. The key is to have a reliable future stream of income, so would-be stars, or those whose careers are just starting out and are hence unpredictable, should probably think again.

Other names rumoured to be interested in Bowie bonds include The Rolling Stones, Crosby Stills and Nash, and Rod Stewart, rumoured to be close to signing a deal.

But the Bowie bonds need not be restricted simply to rock stars. Nomura hopes to arrange

such deals for celebrities in a range of fields, just so long as the outlook for long-term cash flow is healthy. They could be actors, sporting stars, even writers. "We're looking at an entire industry," said Mr Pennier, "from John Grisham to Warner Brothers."

"The idea is starting to flesh out," said Cara Burns, a lawyer representing the music star Don Henley and the golfer Tiger Woods. Her concerns, she said, would include ensuring that her client retains full ownership of the property, such as a music catalogue, and the tax implications.



Shouting the odds: Ozzy Osbourne, who launched a rock bond scheme, seems to make an unlikely source of profit for Wall Street moguls

Photograph: David Sandison

Why banking's big shots swoon as they see a fistful of dollars in the stars

Wall Street has a message for David Bowie. Thank you, thank you, thank you. When times are booming - like now - the brokerage boys go crazy trying to dream up new ways to draw in the dollars of investors who themselves are scouring the horizon for new places to invest their rivers of fresh money.

In fact, the Bowie bonds have everyone swooning.

Any star with a real prospect of long-term earnings, most probably from royalties, can expect a sudden, up-front, dose of cash.

The banks rake in giant fees for arranging the deals. And the investors themselves have what should be a surefire success.

Such deals are less exotic than may first appear. For years, markets have traded in bonds guaranteed by future cash flows that can be reliably predicted. Mortgage-backed bonds are the most obvious and popular example.

Called fixed-income securities, they are attractive for investors who buy them. Over a fixed period, say ten years, they are assured a set rate of interest.

They pocket that interest, and get their original money back when the bonds mature. Thus they are less risky than stocks and shares which are vulnerable to the surges, but also the sudden falls, of the markets.

In recent years, the range of asset-backed bonds has broadened ferociously. Several US cities are raising cash, for instance, by selling bonds backed by unpaid parking fines.

City officials know that they will get most of the cash eventually, but they need it now. So they go to the investors for it.

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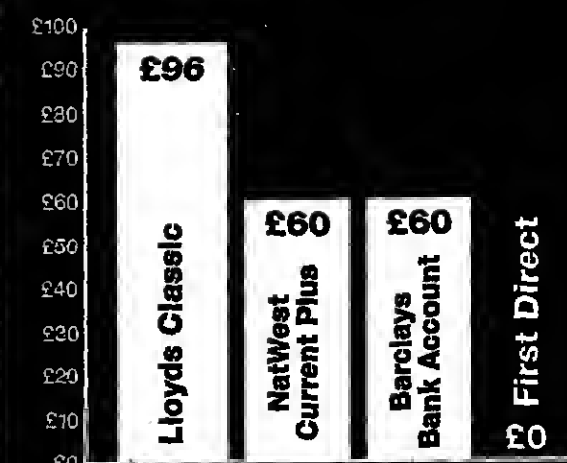
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6/LABOUR CONFERENCE

Blunkett to put £50m into literacy campaign

A £50m standards fund to improve literacy and numeracy will be announced today by David Blunkett, the Secretary of State for Education.

Judith Judd, Education Editor, explains where the money will come from and how the initiative fits in to the Government's schools programme.

David Blunkett, the Secretary of State for Education, will today announce a £50m standards fund to be used for initiatives such as training for primary school teachers in how to improve their teaching of reading.

The money, which will be available next year, will come mainly from the Grants for Education Support and Training (Gest) fund which pays out cash to local education authorities for specific projects. However, some extra money will come from other parts of the education budget.

Mr Blunkett is insisting that traditional methods such as phonics should play a part in teaching reading. Schools which are struggling to raise standards will be sent specially appointed consultants. There will also be two days training next summer for the head, literacy co-ordinator and a governor from every primary school.

Secondary schools are expected to benefit from projects to teach pupils who fail to learn to read in primary school.

Mr Blunkett will confirm a promise to make next year (1998/9) the National Year of Reading. The Government will fund an advertising campaign urging parents to read with their children at home for at least 20 minutes each day.

At present, the Government finds 60 per cent of the money for most Gest projects while local education authorities find the remainder. From next year that will decrease to 50 per cent.

As the Prime Minister reminded the Labour Party conference yesterday, the Government has set bold targets of 80 per cent of 11-year-olds reaching the expected standard in literacy by 2002 and 75 per cent doing so in numeracy.

Mr Blair also repeated his promise to reverse the Conservatives' policy of cutting spending on education. The last government, he said, had planned to cut from £83m to £43m the money that came from the Home Office to help children from homes where English is a second language, making redundant 7,000 teachers and classroom assistants.

"Today I announce that Tory cut will not stand," he said. Comprehensive school campaigners said that government proposals for parents to vote on the future of grammar schools would make it very difficult to end selection. The Campaign for the Advancement of State Education said that the proposal to require 20 per cent of eligible parents to call for a ballot would force organisers to collect thousands of signatures.



The South Coast Show: Melvyn Bragg chats to Mick Hucknall of the pop group Simply Red Photograph: Brian Harris

Party in the red after £23m election campaign

Labour spent £23m on the general election campaign — twice the amount it spent in 1992 — and is now millions of pounds in the red, the party was told yesterday, by its treasurer, Margaret Prosser.

Party leaders hope to get the deficit down to £3.5m by the end of the year, but they are seeking a change in the law to avoid running into the red during the next election campaign. Tony Blair has given a clear signal that Labour could seek a cap on spending by the main parties for the next general election, as reported last week in *The Independent*.

The Prime Minister said in his keynote address that Labour would ask the Nolan Committee on standards in public life to look at party funding, and to come up with recommendations for changes in the law. "At the next election, all political parties will at last compete on a level playing field."

Ms Prosser said that, with "belt-tightening and good husbandry", the overdraft in the general fund would be kept down to £3.5m by the end of the year, and there would be a "small, declining" overdraft in the general election fund. She promised that the pace of fund-raising would not diminish.

"The party cannot achieve its political objectives in one term. My job is to chivvy everyone along and make sure the next election war-chest builds up."

Defending the amount Labour spent on the election, Ms Prosser said the £23m spent between 1993 and 1 May this year had produced a "powerful, imaginative and high-powered campaign".

She added: "It was at the same time... focused and reached all corners of the UK and all levels of society."

— Colin Brown

Challenge on Europe

Pauline Green, leader of Labour's MEPs, told the conference that Tony Blair's Government should "take the lead in shaping the future of Europe" and embrace membership of a single currency.

Delegates were also urged by the Portuguese Prime Minister Antonio Guterres not just to climb aboard the European train but to get into the engine room.

Ms Green said Labour's election had given the socialist family a majority in the EU. But she warned: "What goes with that predominance is the responsibility to make a difference."

The "direction, tone and effectiveness" of the new Government had already had an impact in Europe and Britain now had the chance to "offer some leadership", she said.

SEEN & HEARD

"Twenty years ago the IMF came to bury us. Now they come to praise us. Yes, new Labour's got friends everywhere."

— Tony Blair

"There are still times in Northern Ireland when the sheer rawness of the sectarian hatred and bigotry never ceases to surprise me."

— Mo Mowlam

"It is like going through composing all over again. It insults a nation of intelligent, enlightened people." (Attack on the stereotyping of the Irish in *Eastenders*)

— Nick Nolan, Coventry NW

"I am a survivor of cancer. I joined the [cancer] awareness campaign and my husband said, 'You silly cow. You didn't have to get it.'"

— Delegate in the health debate

"Tory leaders used to be born with a silver spoon in their mouth. This one was born with his foot in his mouth."

— Mary Turner, NEC member, in a debate on women

"We hope the hard edge is extended to those who can afford it."

— Rodney Bickerstaffe, on Tony Blair's speech

Today's agenda:

- David Blunkett defends his decision to charge fees to students, in the face of fierce criticism from some delegates.
- Harriet Harman tells the conference about her plans for the benefits system.
- John Prescott opens a debate on the "One Nation Society" with a speech on housing.
- Michael Meacher on the Government's environment policy.

And on the fringe:

- Universities: Lifelong learning for all? Speakers include Baroness Tessa Blackstone.
- Pitch fever: The future of football. Tony Banks, minister for sport, and Peter Lee, chief executive of the Football Trust.
- Rationing in the NHS: A fair system for all? With Frank Dobson, Secretary of State for Health.
- Save Britain's Fish. Speakers include Aussie Mitchell MP. With fish and chip supper.
- Socialist campaign group of MPs. Diane Abbott, Dennis Skinner and Ken Livingstone celebrates their success in the NEC elections with Tony Benn, Jeremy Corbyn and Alan Simpson.
- Labour Campaign for Social Justice: Decent pensions for all. Baroness Barbara Castle calls for better treatment for the elderly.

Dobson gets back on-message

Fine words about health workers had to be backed up by more spending, Frank Dobson, the Secretary of State for Health, was told yesterday by Rodney Bickerstaffe, leader of Unison, the main NHS union.

Mr Bickerstaffe told the Labour conference that "it would be a shame if this very winter we face again bed closures, ward closures, hospital closures — and those things are on the cards if more resources are not found in some way".

Mr Dobson denied being "sat on" by the leadership after he dropped an explicit threat to sack people from health boards who had private health insurance. There has been continuing speculation that Mr Dobson could be dropped by Tony Blair in his next reshuffle for going "off message" in the past.

Briefing about the speech is believed to have the leadership, and remarks which were in the text at 5pm on Monday were dropped.

He was expected to say: "People who don't use the health service won't be running it from now on." That was replaced by a more general commitment. "How can people who don't use local hospitals know enough about them to run them?"

— Colin Brown

The Great Masseur flexes his fingertips

On Monday night the young woman sitting in front of me at a slightly tedious fringe meeting began to massage her boyfriend's neck. This was no momentary affectionate stroke; it was the full Monty. She slipped her fingers under his collar and kneaded the soft flesh, moved her hand up to the back of his crown and — with her right thumb — vigorously rubbed his number-four crop, dropped back down to his nape and squeezed rhythmically, till the skin reddened. And then stroked again.

When — at last — she stopped, her previously wilting companion was feeling much, much better. He had had the tough but tender treatment: compassion with a hard edge.

Imagine this trick now repeated on an epic scale. For yesterday at just after 2.30pm, Mr Blair — the Great Masseur — entered the hall in Brighton to some rousing organ music (and, indeed, I dare say that many organs were roused by it). In essence, the Prime Minister's task was the same as my anonymous young lady's, to give pleasure and

pain in the right quantities, in order to benefit the whole.

Broadly, then, he required the same two basic techniques. And — on mounting the podium — he deployed them both. First came the delicious fluttering of executive fingertips around the erogenous zones of his party and the country.

gallery shouted "Hear, hear" so emphatically that she nearly expired. Cherished and valued, naturally.

But in between the nice, squirmy bits, there was the hard kneading to be done — or, as he put it (to a little shiver of anticipation in the hall): "A strong society cannot be built on soft choices."

BRIGHTON SKETCH BY DAVID AARONOVITCH

So, there was a new target of two billion snickers to be spent on school buildings — 700 million more than before (tickle, tickle). There would be half a million extra students in higher education by 2002 (caress). And — more generally — he would not rest until we had a Britain in which "no child goes hungry, the young are employed and the old are cherished and valued until the end of their days" (at which point an old lady in the

Any moment we would feel the PM's thumbs dig painfully into our flabby psyches, determinedly manipulating the muscles and fat right down to the bone. To get to Nirvana we'd have to suffer, surely?

And he did tell us that the welfare state would have to be "fundamentally reformed", that it must "encourage work not dependency". But, abruptly, the thumbs retreated, and moved on to another part of the body politic. Housing ben-

efit "has to change". The thumbs had shifted again. Then, the NHS "needs modernisation." Oh yes! This was an area, like the buttocks, that needed some real work. But, once more, he'd moved on.

Finally, for a few moments the Great Masseur stroked some of his own aching joints and tender parts. He rubbed his *pluribus maximus*, referring to the need for a radical realignment in politics, redefined his Britain, and, above all, brandished his beacon to the world.

In fact, "beacons" were mentioned many times. The trouble is that most young people have never heard of beacons. They have, however, drunk their juice from beakers, and are even now asking their parents why that nice Mr Blair wants Britain to be a "a beaker for the 21st Century".

But that is a quibble. In this louchy-feely Dianic era, the Great Masseur, with his "make this the giving age" did well. Next time, though, he'll have to use a bit more of the thumb. Like Ms X's boyfriend, we need to feel the pain.

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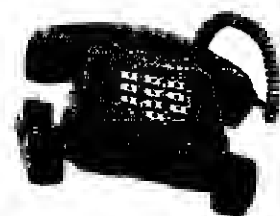
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هكذا من الأصل

Blair: We must create a proud nation

Patriotism and the task of rebuilding Britain were at the heart of Tony Blair's speech to the Labour conference. From Abrams heard him tell delegates that he wanted the country to set an example to the rest of the world.

Britain can and should be the best place in the world to live, the Prime Minister said. In a speech which combined enthusiasm for the "richness" of the British character with an attack on the "modern crisis" of teenage pregnancy and family breakdown, he thanked the people for putting their trust in Labour.

"I want them to say, this week as they watch us here in Brighton: we did the right thing. I want the British people to be proud of having elected us as we are to serve them," he said.

Mr Blair said the highlight of the election for him was seeing people waving and clapping as he drove to Buckingham Palace. "They were liberated. There were the smiles of tolerant, broad-minded, outward-looking, compassionate people and suddenly they learned that they were in the majority after all. As one woman put it to me, 'We've got our government back'. And with them I could sense confidence returning to the British people, compassion to the British soul, unity to the British nation, and that all three would give us new found strength."

"The people were yearning for change in their country, at a time when they could see we had had the guts to modernise our party. The two came together. The result is a quiet revolution now taking place. Led by the real modernisers - the British people."

The British people had always been open to change and renewal. "As our great poet John Milton put it, we are a na-

tion now slow or dull, but of quick, ingenious and piercing spirit, acute to invent, subtle and sinewy to discourse, not beneath the reach of any point that human capacity can soar to."

"Today I say to the British people: the chains of mediocrity have broken, the tired days are behind us, we are free to excel once more. We are free to build that model 21st Century nation, to become that beacon to the world."

There was no room for complacency, he said. "May I was the beginning not the end. We have never won two full consecutive terms of office. Never. That is one more record I want to break. No cockiness about the Tories even now. They're not dead. Just sleeping."

"What the people give, the people can take away. We are the servants. They are the masters now," he said.

Labour had already begun to fulfil its contract with the people, putting money into hospitals and schools, signing the social chapter, restoring union rights at GCHQ and banning both handguns and landmines.

As usual, one of the main themes was education, and Mr Blair read out two letters congratulating him on the government's new summer schools.

One of them, from 11 year-old Emma O'Brien of Ellesmere Port, said: "All of us have made new friends. I think you and Parliament have done the right thing. I have got a better education."

Mr Blair went on to set a target of £2bn for school repairs and equipment during this Parliament, and to promise that 10,000 schools would benefit by 2002. Standards must be raised, particularly in literacy and numeracy, and poor teaching would not be tolerated. By 2002, every school in Britain would have modern computers, programs to go with them and the teachers skilled to teach on them, he promised.

Anticipating a row over government plans to make graduates repay their fees, he



Screen star: 'There is a place for all the people in new Britain ...'

Photograph: Brian Harris

promised to put the money saved into universities and colleges and to allow for an extra 500,000 students in five years' time.

There would be difficult decisions to be made, he said, particularly on the economy. Interest rates had had to go up, but they were still well below the high levels of the early 1990s. The Tory cycle of boom and bust was being broken.

"I want Britain to be a country of enterprise and ambition where small businesses grow, manufacturing and engineering revive, where we learn the

lessons of British industrial relations over the past 100 years. Fairness at work, yes. But flexibility will remain."

There would be tough choices on welfare, too. "We will not be that beacon to the world in the year 2005 with a welfare state built for the very different world of 1945."

The NHS was "the greatest act of modernisation any Labour government ever did". More hospitals would be built, with one more being added to the list of 14 already announced.

Everyone would have to get

involved to make the changes work, though. "I tell you: a decent society is not based on rights. It is based on duty. Our duty to each other. To all should be given opportunity, from all responsibility demanded."

"I make no apology. I back zero tolerance on crime. I back powers to tackle anti-social neighbours; to make parents responsible for their children."

Other announcements in the speech included a Bill to ban foreign donations to political parties and a White Paper on simpler government, aiming to connect more people with

services via new technology.

The new Britain should be one where discrimination and racism were outlawed, and which played a leading role in Europe. All the people should play a part in creating it.

"There is a place for all the people in new Britain... believe in us as much as we believe in you. Give just as much to our country as we intend to give. Give your all. Make this the giving age. Britain, head and heart, can be unbeatable. That is the Britain I offer you. That is the Britain that together can be ours."

FROM THE FLOOR:
CHERRY MOSTESHAR



Tony's message was just for me

You might have not have noticed, but Tony was talking directly to me yesterday afternoon. It all started on Monday night when I was instructed not to write these seditious pieces, and this before a single word had appeared.

But don't blame the messenger - a hard-working party official - the shadows in this place can get to you. And we do know that the spinners are too clever ever to do their own dirty work.

It was not an official party instruction just an official local one. In fact, when I finally got to ask a party official if I was being told not to write for *The Independent*, I was told I would not be furnished with the material to hang them.

This might be a good point to re-assure them that I love the Labour Party, if I didn't I wouldn't have stood - unsuccessfully - as a county councillor on 1 May. I would not have delivered 3,000-plus pieces of election material and I wouldn't spend most of my free time on unpaid party business.

But, back to Monday night when after a great day with my party, I was told that I could not write. So I sought out party regional officers and told them I was on the verge of resigning from the party I discovered in 1974 and to which I have been loyal every day since.

It took until the next morning to be told that all I had to do was write a letter of resignation and leave. Foolishly I had expected at least a "that would be a shame".

This country wants, needs and deserves a Labour government, but surely it doesn't need to tell its members to be happy clones who are either to speak on message or learn to say no comment.

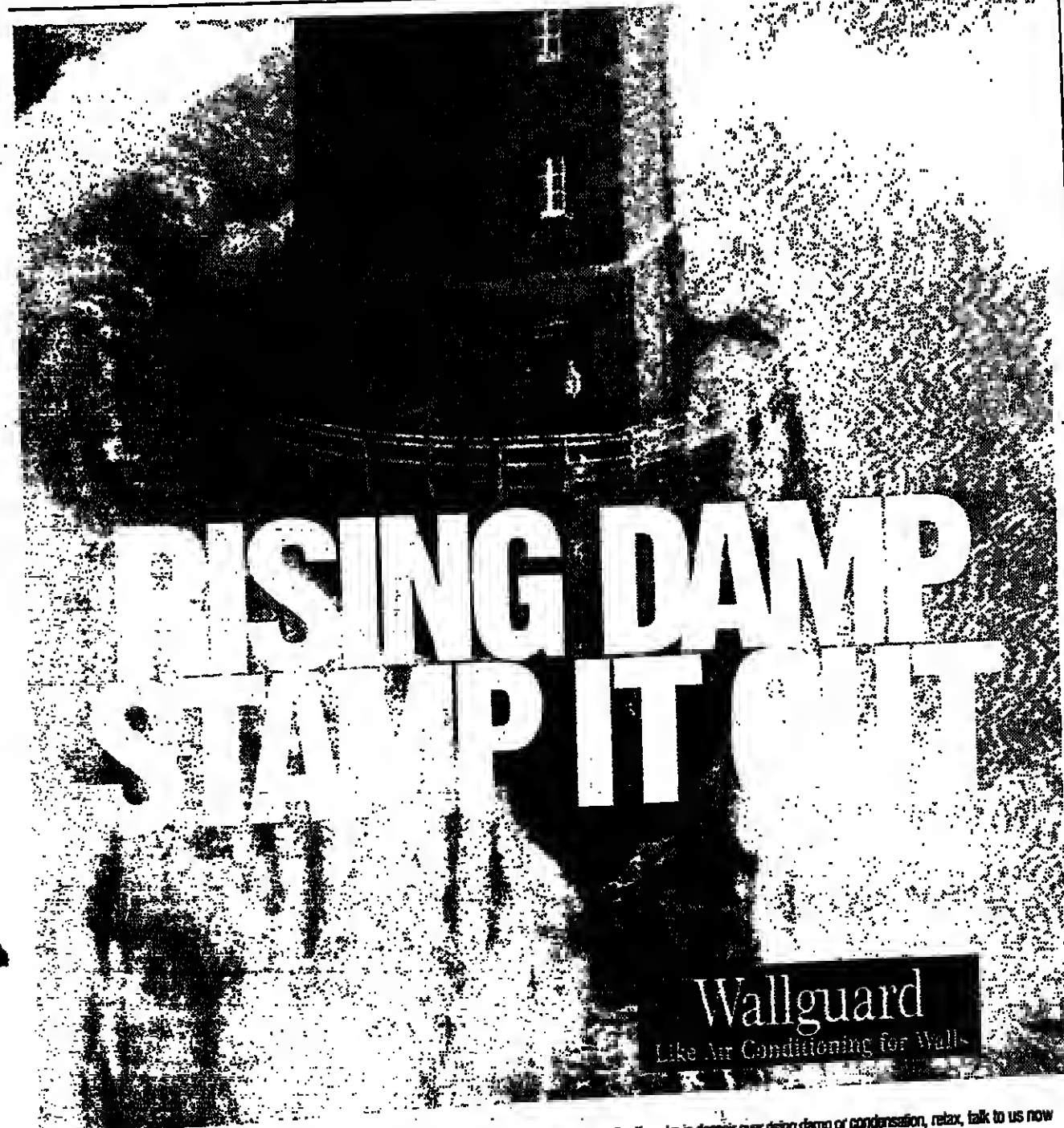
This whole sorry story started at a delegates' briefing last week, where I was advised that when in Brighton I should not only not say anything negative to the press - those evil twisters - but should not be critical in conversation with my fellow delegates when in public in case a journalist might hear!

Naively I spoke up and admitted that I was one of those evil creatures and said that this very tactic of silence makes the press even more hungry and the people suspicious.

Yesterday morning, after my first article appeared in this newspaper - light-hearted and innocuous. I thought - I was invited to attend a "wide ranging tête-a-tête" with the spin-doctors. It is an invitation that is yet to come to fruition, but I still hold out hope that I may get the chance of being Mandelstoned.

If it hadn't been for the tears and hugs of enraged fellow delegates on the floor of conference yesterday I may have been on the last train out of town.

And then came Tony's vision of not new Labour, not old Labour but just Labour. I could be mistaken but I took it as his telling me there was a place for me. All that I know for certain is that I intend to continue exercising my right to free speech.



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Lesbians win equality victory in Europe

The campaign for gays to enjoy the equal employment rights passed a legal milestone yesterday when the test case brought by railway clerk Lisa Grant won backing in a critical preliminary opinion at the European Court of Justice. Patricia Wynn Davies, Legal Affairs Editor, reports.

Lisa Grant and her lover Jill Percy clasped hands at a news conference as they celebrated an historic turning point in the cause of equal rights between the sexes, after a ruling that is likely to have far-reaching implications for Europe's 35 million lesbians and gay men and their employers.

Michael Elmer, advocate-general at the European Court of Justice in Luxembourg, had just delivered his long-awaited opinion in the case brought by Ms Grant, 30, against her employers, South West Trains. It had refused to allow her partner Ms Percy, 38, a nurse at the Royal Hampshire County Hospital in Winchester, the same travel concessions - worth about £1,000 a year - as other workers' spouses or opposite-sex cohabitants.

The company argued throughout the two-year legal battle that the discrimination was permissible because it was based not on sex, but on sexual orientation.

That approach has been emphatically rejected by Mr Elmer, who agreed with Lisa Grant's counsel, Cherie Booth QC, that discrimination on grounds of sex or orientation amounted to the same thing.

"We are ecstatic," Ms Percy said. "Lisa's private life does not affect the way she works



Just cause: Lisa Grant (left) and Jill Percy in jubilant mood after yesterday's European Court ruling. Photograph: Philip Meach

and we felt it should not affect her pay." Mr Elmer's opinion is not binding on the full court of 15 judges who will make a final ruling in about six months' time, but it will be unusual if they do not follow it. Ms Grant's solicitor, Ruth Harvey of the London law firm Sheridans, said employers would have to scrutinise policies on pay-related perks and

benefits for unmarried heterosexual couples. Company pension schemes, in particular, could face significant upheaval where they extend to opposite-sex cohabitants.

Martin Hopkins, head of employment at the Birmingham firm Eversheds, suggested that some firms might choose to "retrench in the opposite direction" by restricting ben-

efits and concessions to married partners. But a combination of the likely final upshot in the Grant case and another ruling by the Luxembourg court last year is likely to open the way for gays and lesbians to be guaranteed equal treatment in promotion and opportunities for training, and to protection from dismissal because of their sexual orientation.

Former miners win £125,000 over finger disease

Seven ex-miners suffering from a disabling finger disease were yesterday awarded almost £125,000 by a High Court judge.

Solicitors in the case believe the Government could now face a bill of up to £50m as the ruling clears the way to a further 500 compensation claims against British Coal by thousands of former pit men.

However, two of the nine men who had brought the case for Vibration White Finger - which involves damage to the hand's circulation and nerves from vibration and can cause loss of grip and sensitivity - failed to convince the judge at Newcastle High Court that they qualified for damages.

British Coal said it was considering launching an appeal. In a statement it said: "The court rejected two of the nine cases. This is significant. The judge has recognised British Coal's concerns and the substantial difficulties in assessing VWF cases."

Police smash Pep fraud ring

Detectives yesterday claimed to have smashed a fraud syndicate which had swindled hundreds of thousands of pounds in a simple scam involving applications for Pep savings schemes.

The alleged fraudsters hit financial institutions across Britain, opening Pep or unit trust accounts with cheques which were usually for between £5,000 and £10,000.

They then exploited a refund clause before banks realised that the original cheques had come from fictitious or closed accounts.

Yesterday more than 60 officers from four forces raided 15 addresses in central London. Five people were arrested. The total losses from the scam were believed to be around £250,000, although the potential had been far greater.

Youngest ever lottery winner

Greig Stevens, 19, from Southend, Essex, is the youngest ever National Lottery jackpot winner, pocketing £5,453,165 in Saturday's rollover jackpot, it was announced yesterday. Greig, a former student at South East Essex College, plans to improve his golf swing.

Woman lied over rape case

The 23-year-old student who claims she was raped by six Army officers admitted yesterday that she had lied to the police about a sexual incident which had happened 10 days before the alleged gang attack.

Although she had sex with two men in the same room, she only mentioned the cadet Nicholas Oettinger, one of the defendants, to police last November. It was not until she learnt that the defendants and a friend had given more details that she admitted that she had had sex with a second man an hour later, while Mr Oettinger was still in the room.

Yesterday, at Oxford Crown

Court, Stuart Montrose, QC, for the defence, asked the woman: "It is quite clear that you didn't tell the truth about Rupert [the second man] in that statement, did you?" She replied: "No ... because I thought that if ... [the police] thought that I'd had sex with two men, then they wouldn't believe me about the six."

The woman, who was working as a bartender near the Royal Military College of Science at Shrivenham, Oxfordshire, claims she was raped by two captains, two lieutenants and two cadets on 27 May last year.

Mr Oettinger, 20, of Preston, Lancashire, Andy Stout, 20, of

Whickham, Tyne and Wear, Matthew Tipling, 23, of Bordon, Hampshire, Darren Bartlett, 23, of Abingdon, Berkshire, Philip Bates, 25, of Bordon, and Ian Barlow, 28, of Warrington Army Base, in Suffolk, all deny rape.

Earlier yesterday, the woman had wept as she relived the alleged hour-long sexual ordeal. The jury was shown a florist's note which had accompanied a bunch of flowers sent to the woman by the six two days after the alleged incident.

It read: "Sorry for any misunderstanding. Please accept apologies from all involved." The trial continues.

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DAILY POEM

The Gethsemane Garden Competition

by Helen Dunmore

Out of moss and twigs, daisies and fallen cherry blossom,
the chipped bit of a handbag mirror, cottonwood lambs,
I made my Gethsemane garden.

I soldered the circuitry of Easter -
on a tin tray, getting everything into proportion.
I knew better than to dwarf my green hill with daffodils,
or mould the dank mouth of the tomb too small to fit in a lamb.

My tray was alive and breathing.
There was dawn in that garden,
the surprise of birds.
I could talk myself down
where ducks paddled soft black mud
in the reeds round the pond.

This week's poems come from *The Forward Book of Poetry 1998* (Forward Publishing, £7.95). It consists of shortlisted work and selected other entries for this year's Forward Prizes, to be awarded on 8 October. Helen Dunmore's poem appears in her new collection *Betwixt* (Blondaxe).

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Warm reception: Mo Mowlam at conference yesterday Photograph: Brian Harris

Mowlam prepares way to scrap internment

Powers of internment in Ulster are to be scrapped by the Government. Colin Brown, Chief Political Correspondent says it was a power even the Tories dared not use.

The Emergency Powers Bill - one of three measures on Ulster being brought in during the next session of Parliament - will scrap the power to imprison people without trial. It will also reduce the number of cases going to Diplock courts without juries.

Mo Mowlam, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, told a fringe meeting in Brighton that she would have preferred to go further, but she had to make a start. The

removal of internment powers - which could be reintroduced in a bill in 24 hours - could help to overcome criticism that she is not scrapping more anti-terrorist powers, such as exclusion orders.

The move is part of the confidence building measures promised at the election to bolster the ceasefire and encourage the parties to agree to a lasting settlement.

The powers were introduced at the height of the Troubles in August 1971 and last used in 1975, but they backfired disastrously, bringing international disapproval and proved a security failure.

Sir Patrick Mayhew, the former Ulster secretary, resisted pressure to reintroduce internment during upsurges in terrorist violence, fearing they would inflame the situation.

However, the past Tory government insisted on keep-

ing the powers in reserve on the statute book. But Ms Mowlam has decided to go a step further. "We are taking internment off the face of the Bill," Ms Mowlam said. "Internment has not been used since the early Seventies."

She was given a warm standing ovation at the party conference for her efforts to secure peace in the Province. There were several protests at the portrayal of Irish people as rowdy drunks in a recent episode of the television soap, *EastEnders*, and Ms Mowlam said: "There is anger among the delegates over *EastEnders*. I have had a lot of telephone calls and I understand that anger because I thought we had got over stereotyping of that nature. *EastEnders* talks about real life problems and does it very well but obviously got the balance wrong and I regret that."

Sinn Fein and Ulster Unionist leaders sat across the table and agreed a framework for full-scale talks next week. But David McKitterick, Ireland Correspondent, says there is a powerful minority of "No Surrender" Unionists totally opposed to the dialogue.

Loyalist storm-clouds are gathering. The Rev Ian Paisley attempted to whip up opposition to the talks, when on Monday night he brought an estimated 2,000 supporters to the Ulster Hall in Belfast where they prayed together for deliverance from "the powers of darkness, the demon from the pits of hell".

They sang "The Sash my Father Wore" and "There'll Always be an Ulster", gave repeated standing ovations to Mr Paisley and his ally, Robert McCartney MP, and greeted mentions of the name of Ulster Unionist leader David Trimble with cries of "Lundy" and "tra-

itor". The battlelines were drawn, in other words, in a fight for the soul of Unionism.

Mr Paisley's approach was based upon tradition, both recent and ancient. His own tradition, seen repeatedly during the last three decades, is to oppose any moves in the direction of a compromise settlement.

But he and Mr McCartney both evoked the memory of Edward Carson, one of Unionism's most revered founding fathers, who in the same hall in 1912 declared the Protestants of Ulster ready to use "all means which may be found necessary" to oppose a united Ireland.

Mr McCartney endorsed Carson's words. Mr Paisley, meanwhile, recalled this it was in the same hall in 1886 that Lord Randolph Churchill declared: "Ulster will fight and Ulster will be right." The two men, speaking as Carson did in front of a huge Union flag, accused the Government of trying to bring about Irish unity, calling on Mr Trimble to leave the talks and form a united Unionist front against the negotiations.

These appeals were not however couched in conciliatory terms; rather, they were accompanied by much personal



Not an inch: Edward Carson addressing Ulstermen

abuse and scorn directed against Mr Trimble and his party. At one stage Mr Paisley referred to Mr Trimble's party as "yellow-bellied".

He described some of those involved in the talks as scallywags and dinosaurs, referring to one senior official as "a very dangerous rascal, one of those very uncivil civil servants who would sell their grandmother for an OBE". He named and attacked a business leader who

has spoken out in favour of talks.

The criticisms drew thunderous applause, and occasionally foot-stomping, from an audience which seemed drawn largely from the ranks of his party, the Democratic Unionists, and his church, the Free Presbyterians.

They announced the launch of a Unionist roadshow, with rallies to be held in towns and villages in the coming weeks to drum up support and increase pressure on the Ulster Unionists to pull out of the talks. The UUP is to be invited to take part in a committee and a large-scale Unionist convention.

They also set up a fund, launched with a donation of £5,000 from Mr McCartney, to finance "a concerted, unified and professional campaign" to counter moves to break the Union.

Mr Trimble, speaking as the rally was taking place, appealed to Mr Paisley and Mr McCartney to join the Stormont talks and "stop stabbing in the back those of us who have the courage to face the enemies of peace and democracy". He added: "One sad aspect of politics today is the relentless neg-

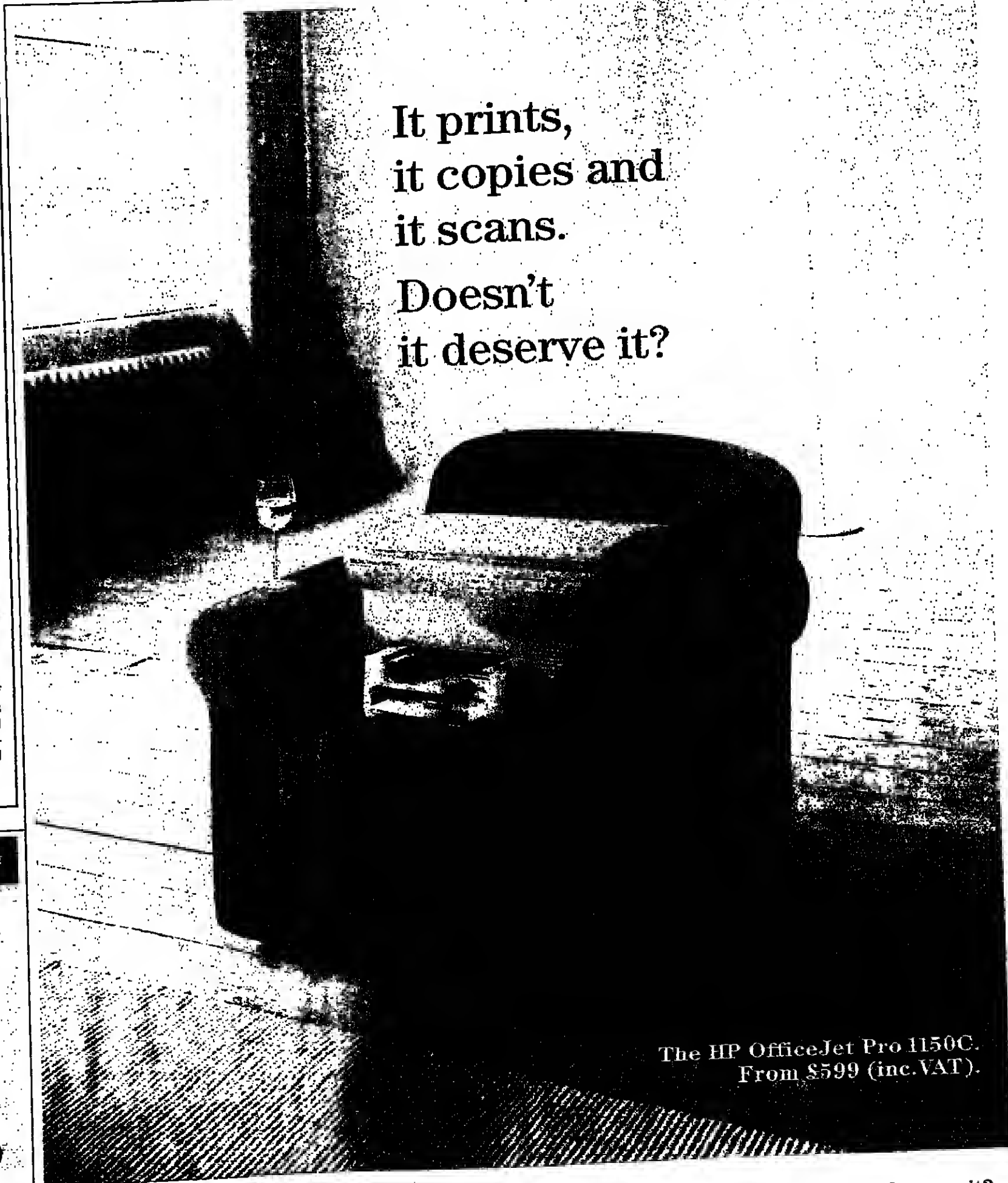
ativity of a minority of Unionists. These prophets of doom say that participation in talks is useless. I reject such pessimism."

Opinion polls and other evidence suggest that a large majority of Unionists approve of participation in talks but that, as attendance at the rally indicates, a minority is deeply opposed to such negotiations. The Paisley-McCartney rallies will provide a focal point for such opposition in the months ahead.

Inside the talks yesterday things went surprisingly smoothly with Sinn Fein, the Ulster Unionists and other parties agreeing an order of business which should see start of actual negotiations next week.

Two Ulster Unionists sat across the table from Martin McGuinness and another Sinn Fein representative for the first meeting of the business committee. It recommended that each of the complex strands for negotiation should be launched on the same day, possibly Tuesday of next week.

The atmosphere was said to be constructive, one source commenting: "There was little posturing - nobody put up false obstacles, everybody genuinely wanted to get down to business."



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Is the global warming rhetoric just hot air?

The Government's chief scientific adviser has set out the challenges presented by global warming. Charles Arthur, Science Editor, looks at what he has to say while (below right) Nicholas Schoon, Environment Correspondent, asks whether Tony Blair will be able to live up to his green rhetoric.

Slowing and then reversing global warming will initially be a struggle between two groups of developed countries: the "disbelievers", such as the United States, Canada and Australia, and "believers", such as the United Kingdom, allied with the rest of the European Union. Developing countries such as China will join the fray later, which side they join could be crucial to our future.

It may not help, but the "believers" have science on their side. Sir Robert May, the UK government's chief scientific adviser, happens to be Australian, but that does not stop him criticising any country which drags its feet over action to stop global warming.

Sir Robert's 37-paragraph report, commissioned by the Prime Minister in the summer and written in the past couple of months, draws together work by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and some regional analyses carried out for the UK government last year.

If nobody acts, it shows that there will be an average global temperature rise of between 1.5C and 4.5C - probably 2.5C - by 2050, caused by a doubling of atmospheric carbon dioxide levels. Sea levels will rise by about 50cm (20in) as the warming oceans expand. Weather will become more variable and more extreme. If we act, the report offers various scenarios, depending on the final levels of carbon dioxide. "It's a long, slow process, like turning a ship around," Sir Robert said.

The likely venue for a first, important battle between the two groups of countries is December's meeting of senior government representatives in Kyoto, in central Japan.

Britain will be represented at the conference by John Prescott, the deputy Prime Minister.

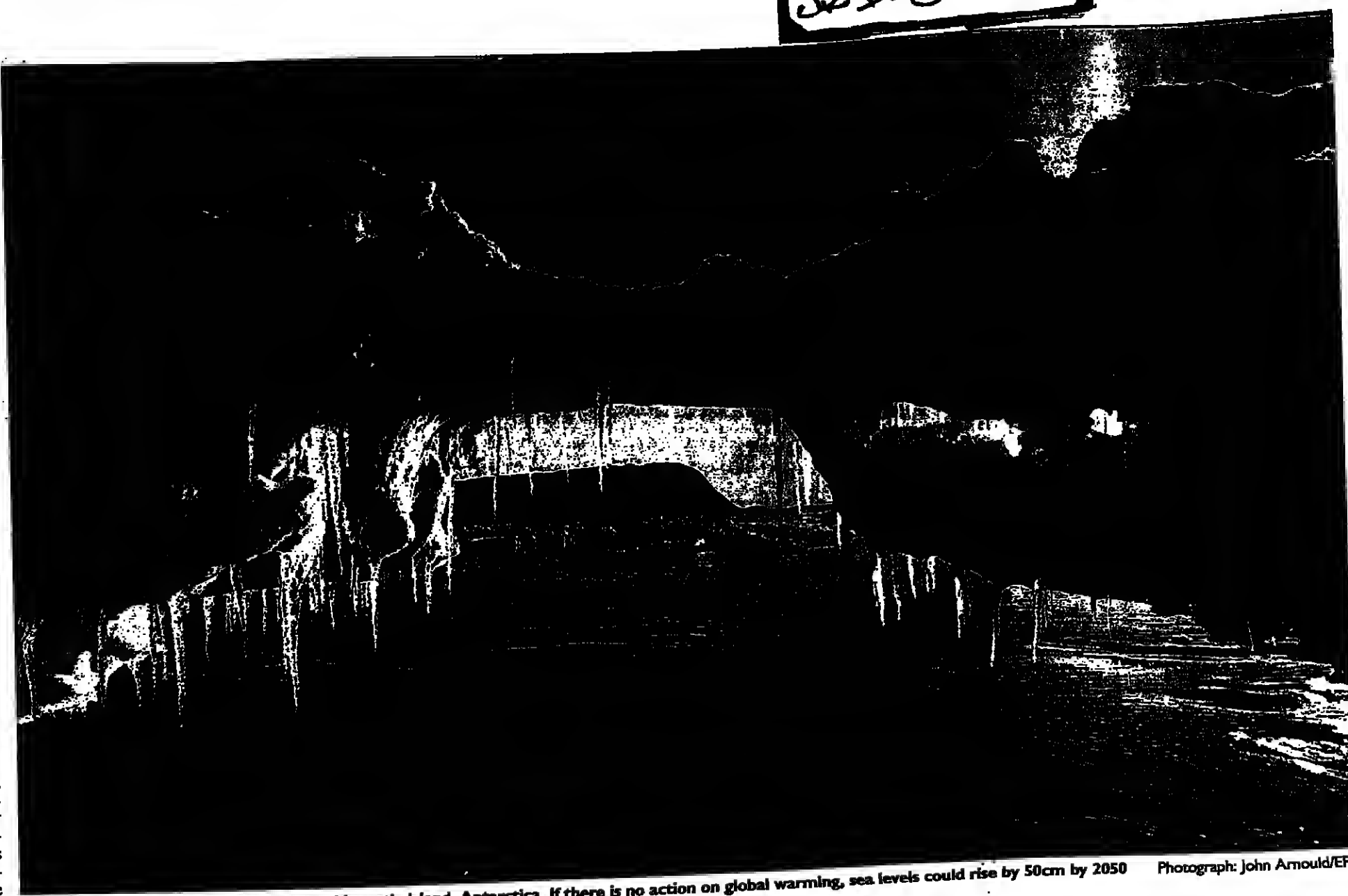
Certainly, a doctory fighter will be needed in the face of those countries' continued insistence that global warming is either less of a threat than is made out, or that their own growth in carbon-dioxide output - which contributes significantly to the greenhouse effect - can be offset elsewhere, for example by reforestation in the Amazon.

As Tony Blair was speaking at the Labour Party's conference in Brighton yesterday, Sir Robert said: "We will go in Kyoto with the Government's manifesto commitment to reduce the UK's carbon dioxide output by 20 per cent by 2010. The EU is speaking of a 15 per cent reduction. That's a hell of a lot more than [US President Bill] Clinton is offering." He thinks achieving that 20 per cent target will be "difficult - but we have aim for it".

Any commitments made in Kyoto to reductions will be legally binding - possibly with financial penalties for breaking them. Delegates are also exploring the idea of having "permits" allowing a certain amount of carbon-dioxide emission; these could be traded between companies within a country, or even between countries.

Sir Robert hinted that the UK might be prepared to accept a less stringent target if that would persuade other developed countries to reduce their emissions.

But some politicians in the US are suggesting that they could take action abroad - for example, planting forests in developing countries - to compensate for the global effects of their growing greenhouse gas outputs. "I'm like Oscar Wilde on that," said Sir Robert. "Given two temptations, take both. I'd want to see both happen. But of course in politics, I defer to politicians."



Meltdown: Ice thawing in the summer at Magnetic Island, Antarctica. If there is no action on global warming, sea levels could rise by 50cm by 2050

Photograph: John Arnold/EPL

Blair sticks to pledge to curb carbon dioxide emissions

The Prime Minister stuck to one of his party's most challenging, awkward and potentially unpopular manifesto commitments in his conference speech yesterday - that Britain will cut its emissions of climate-changing carbon dioxide gas by 20 per cent by 2010 to help save the Earth's climate from catastrophic change.

If he means it, that implies big changes in our lives at work, at play and at home. We will certainly have to burn much less of the fossil fuels whose combustion produces the global warming pollutants.

We will either have to travel less, or use much more fuel-efficient cars or much more public transport. Our homes will have to be altered to conserve more warmth, coal mining will decline further, wind farms will continue to expand.

At present, the Government has no policies in place which will deliver anything like these changes. Indeed, the trends are pointing in the wrong direction.

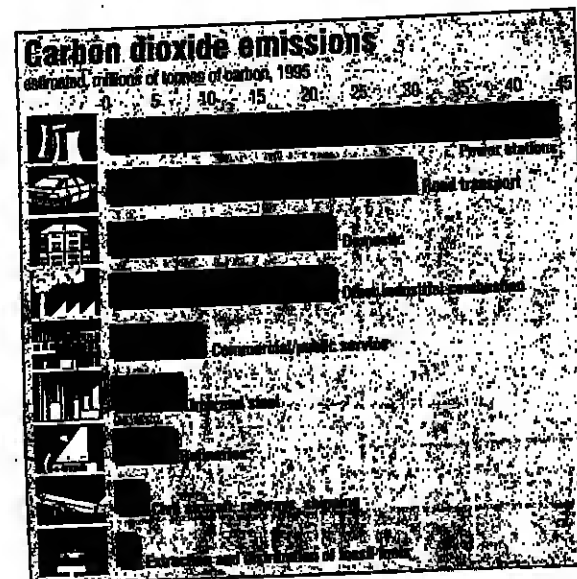
The real, inflation-adjusted prices of gas, heating oil and electricity is cheap compared to the averages over the past quarter century, and getting cheaper. Even petrol, despite being taxed more and more heavily, is not expensive compared to its price during previous post-war oil crises.

Consumption of energy is rising even faster than economic growth. People show no signs of using their cars less and switching to public transport, which produces less carbon dioxide per person moved.

Britain had to take the necessary action to curb emissions "and get the rest of the world to take that action too," he said, referring to the crucial international negotiating meeting in Kyoto, Japan, in December.

And that was it - just two sentences, no specifics and no new policies, despite Labour spin-doctors ensuring this green fragment of his speech got extensive advance publicity.

"We're very disappointed at



what was a wasted opportunity," said Tony Juniper, campaigns director with Friends of the Earth. "It's all very well him saying he is passionate about this issue, but what is actually going to happen?"

What is happening is that John Prescott's Department of

the Environment, Transport and the Regions is negotiating with other key departments, particularly the Treasury and the Department of Trade and Industry, over options on how the 20 per cent emissions cut can be achieved.

The Treasury is resisting the

idea of new energy taxes. Raising the cost of home heating is a no-go area for the Labour Party after the recent VAT cut - even though it is hard to see how any government can be serious about curbing fossil fuel without raising energy prices for ordinary consumers.

And the DTI is worried that new fuel taxes aimed at industry, or other curbs on fossil fuel use, may harm important British companies which produce and distribute energy, like North Sea Oil, or those like chemicals which use large quantities of fuel.

So it is hard pounding for Mr Prescott's team. The objective is to present the Cabinet with an agreed menu of options needed to deliver the 20 per cent cut just before the Kyoto summit. The Government will then know the scale of changes required if it is to deliver that target, but will have no detailed programme for hitting it.

In Japan, the Deputy Prime Minister will negotiate for the

maximum possible cuts on the part of developed countries. The only other major industrialised nation willing to pledge cuts on such a deep scale is Germany, while the European Union as a whole is offering 10 to 15 per cent.

In the United States, the world's biggest user of fossil fuels, the Clinton administration has begun a belated but heavy-weight campaign to make voters and industry take the threat of climate change seriously. But US energy companies have been banging home the message that curbs in oil, gas and coal consumption are a threat to the American way of life.

Will Mr Blair's two sentences make much difference? And if the other rich countries agree on only meagre action, or no action at all, will Britain stay out on a limb offering a drastic 20 per cent cut in emissions? Yesterday no one in government, from Mr Blair downwards, was offering any cast-iron guarantee that it would.

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UN tells off Taliban for taking offence

The United Nations yesterday said Afghanistan's Taliban rulers have no right to be offended by foreign aid workers who decline to follow local religious laws while on UN property.

Taliban officials disrupted a meeting last week at a UN office in Kandahar by demanding a visiting human rights lawyer give her presentation from behind a screen in the corner of the conference room. She did but three male foreign aid workers walked out of the meeting in protest. The Taliban officials then expelled the three male workers, saying they had insulted Afghan traditions and ignored the law of the land.

The United Nations officially protested against the expulsion yesterday, saying UN premises are "extra-territorial", so Taliban officials had no right to try to enforce their laws at the meeting.

Meanwhile, the Taliban militia said its forces were standing at the gates of Mazar-i-Sharif, the besieged northern capital that is the last major city in opposition hands.

A Taliban spokesman said its forces were fighting around the city and their jets had bombed its outskirts yesterday.



Checking in: Workers waiting to have their produce weighed watch as a state farm controller removes extra carrots from a labourer's bag at the state collective farm at Zhdanovichi, 10 miles west of Minsk, in Belarus

Photograph AP

Pakistani artillery kills 18 civilians in Kashmir attack

Pakistani shelling has killed 18 Indian civilians along the border in Kashmir, in spite of a recent agreement between the countries to cease hostilities. A 50-year-old conflict looks set to continue.

Heavy cross-border shelling from Pakistan killed 18 civilians and injured 30 others in India's northern Kashmir yesterday, defence officials said.

It was one of the worst peacetime civilian tolls in a border skirmish between the two countries.

Shells rained on the Himalayan border town of Kargil starting early yesterday afternoon and continuing after nightfall.

Thousands of residents fled the town, said the Army spokesman, Anil Bhatt. "There is a virtual exodus," he

said. Mr Bhatt confirmed 15 dead, but defence officials in the area cited initial reports which had put the death toll at 18.

It was the third serious incident in the last month, although artillery shelling across the disputed frontier is routine. Pakistan had fired on Kargil in June for nearly two days, forcing many residents to flee to areas out of the range of the shells.

Defence and civilian officials in Jammu, the state capital of Jammu-Kashmir, said shells hit a bus stand and a mosque.

Mr Bhatt said that some of the shells may have hit a hospital.

The firing came less than a week after Indian and Pakistani prime ministers met in New York and promised to bring such incidents under control. But there has been no noticeable tapering off.

On Saturday, Pakistani troops fired several shells at an area where India's defence minister, Mulayam

Singh Yadav, was speaking to soldiers. There were no reported injuries.

Jammu-Kashmir's chief minister, the top elected official, condemned yesterday's attack. "This exposes Pakistan's insincerity in normalising relations with India," said Farooq Abdullah.

India and Pakistan have fought two of their three wars in the last 50 years over the Kashmir region. Their armies are face-to-face along a long stretch of boundary, part international border but mostly a ceasefire line. Indian police and hospital officials say more than 20,000 people have died in insurgency-related violence since a separatist rebellion began in the Kashmir valley in 1990.

New Delhi accuses Islamabad of arming and training guerrilla groups who cross the border to fight against Indian rule, but Pakistan says it offers only diplomatic and moral support.

Milosevic-backed challenge ousts Belgrade's mayor

Zoran Djindjic, a leading Serbian opposition figure, was sacked as mayor of Belgrade yesterday after a challenge by a rival opposition party backed by Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic's Socialists and the ultra-nationalists.

Sixty-seven members of the 110-seat city parliament voted for Mr Djindjic's dismissal while the remaining 42 deputies, mainly opposition, were absent. Mr Djindjic was removed 10 months after a socialist election defeat to an opposition coalition in Belgrade that triggered Mr Milosevic's worst political crisis. But Serbia's Western-backed opposition movement has fallen apart since it won key municipal elections last November. The ousting of Mr Djindjic was initiated by the Serbian Renewal Movement party of Vuk Draskovic, his former ally who accused him of incompetence and of spending too much money and time on political activities instead of governance. Mr Djindjic denied the charges and said that his dismissal would be illegal.

— Reuters

Paris brings in car ban

The French government said it would impose curbs on the use of private cars for the first time ever after nitrogen dioxide from car exhaust fumes increased pollution in Paris to alert level yesterday. AirParif, which monitors air quality in the French capital, said pollution had reached "level three", the highest level on its scale, in sunny, windless conditions which "created a very stable atmosphere preventing the dispersion of polluting agents". The environment minister Dominique Voynet ordered "alternate" car traffic for today — banning cars whose licence plates end with an even number.

— Reuters

Kabila tells UN to leave

The President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Laurent Kabila, yesterday asked for a United Nations team investigating alleged massacres in the former Zaire to leave the country immediately. "We request Kofi Annan [UN Secretary-General] to ask them to leave," Mr Kabila told reporters at Lusaka airport shortly before heading home after a visit to neighbouring Zambia.

— Reuters

Dogs' Sicilian enemy

A member of the regional council in Sicily for the centre-left Popular Party wants to pay 50,000 lire (£18) to everyone who brings in the head of a dead stray cat or dog. "It's obvious that [they] carry serious diseases and infections," *La Repubblica* newspaper quoted Francesco Lo Nero as saying. "And then the economic aspect should not be ignored. Do you realise how much one anti-rabies vaccination costs? 300,000 lire," he added.

— Reuters

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Church repents over wartime silence

The French Catholic Church yesterday apologised, to God and to the Jewish people, for its failure to speak out against the persecution of Jews by the Vichy regime in 1940-44. But why so late and why now?

Standing in a gloomy council estate in the northern Paris suburbs from which 76,000 Jews were deported to Auschwitz, and their deaths, a French bishop yesterday read a moving statement of apology and contrition. "Faced with the scale of this event and the unprecedented nature of this crime, the silence of so many pastors of the Church was an offence against the Church itself and the mission of the Church. Today, we confess that this silence was an error... We implore God's forgiveness and ask the Jewish people to hear these words of repentance."

Monsignor Olivier de Berranger, Bishop of Saint Denis, was chosen to read the words because it was in Drancy, in his diocese, that the French authorities created the main transit camp for the deportation of Jews to Poland in 1942-44. The statement was agreed by the entire Catholic hierarchy in France, ending a silence which has lasted for 55 years.

The declaration recognised the actions of a handful of courageous French bishops and priests who spoke out and helped Jews to escape. But it also admitted that the overwhelming number of senior French church men supported the high-Catholic Vichy regime and hid themselves in "indifference" and "conformism". The statement went on to place part of the blame for centuries of Christian anti-Semitism on the "teaching of contempt" by the Church itself.

But why apologise now?



Transit point: A Vichy internment camp from where many thousands of Jews were transported to their deaths in the Polish concentration camps. The statement by the Catholic Church in France owing up to the grave errors of its past, ends a 55 year silence.

Photograph: Keystone/The Wiener Library

Why so long after the war? Why two years after similar admissions of responsibility by the Polish and German Catholic churches and by President Jacques Chirac, on behalf of the French state?

to speak out now. A week today there will begin in Bordeaux the trial of Maurice Papon, a senior official of the Vichy regime in the Bordeaux area who organised and supervised the arrest and deportation of 1,560

decades to face up to what happened. Mr Papon was not an enormously important official under Vichy but, despite his energetic role in the round-up of Jews, he thrived in the French establishment after the war. He was prefect of police in Paris in the late 1950s, head of a semi-state company and, finally, a cabinet minister under President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing before he was denounced by the son of one of his victims in 1981.

His career was possible, and the long silence of the French Catholic church was possible, because Vichy became a closed book after the initial post-war witch-hunting of thousands of very senior and very lowly of-

ficials. The amnesty was especially complete, until at least the 1970s, on the role of French officials in organising the round-up of Jews, the role of French police in carrying it out, and the role of the French church in giving the persecution implicit spiritual support.

The Papon trial will be an exorcism of the French political and legal community's bad conscience about the period 1944-81, as much as the period 1940-44. The French Catholic Church, after waiting so long, decided, in effect, that it ought to get its repentance in first.

Jewish and Catholic leaders also pointed to the significance of the declaration for present-day

politics in France. Anti-Semitism in high-Catholic, *haut-bourgeois* circles did not end with Vichy. Two of the most active strands in the growing support for the far-right, anti-Semitic National Front are Catholic traditionalists and Vichy sentimentalists. The strength of the words in yesterday's statement about the age-old role of the Church in promoting anti-Semitism will be especially welcomed by anti-Front campaigners.

The contemporary importance of the statement could be seen, as if in a distorting mirror, by the reaction of the NF leader, Jean-Marie Le Pen. He said the apology was "absolutely scandalous".

BY JOHN LICHFIELD

Partly, the lead has been given by the Vatican. The Pope has asked the Catholic Church as a whole to wipe the slate clean before the millennium - and the 2,000th anniversary of Christ's birth - by facing up to grave errors in its own past. There were, however, pressing French reasons for the French church

Jews. Mr Papon, 87, is charged with crimes against humanity, the first senior Vichy official to face such charges in court.

The trial, which could last three months, will cause profound soul-searching in France, not just about what happened under Vichy, but about the failure of France over many

France's Jews give mixed response to late admission of guilt

To leaders of the French Jewish community, who have sought a similar statement for years, the church's apology was welcome, even courageous.

Henri Hadjenburg, president of the Council of Jewish Institutions, said that such an admission of responsibility was valuable, even after half a century. "If the seriousness of the error is not admitted, everything becomes possible," he said. "The same circumstances might arise today and no one would do anything about it."

The response of ordinary people in the old Jewish quarter of Paris was more wary, even cynical. "Apologies are fine," said one passer-by. "But during the war, the Church, like 99 per cent of French people was anti-Semitic, apart from a few exceptions which confirm the rule. If they are apologising now it's because public opinion has changed. They are going with the flow. You might have hoped they would lead."

Was the bulk of France anti-Semitic during the war? It is true that the vast majority of government officials went along with the laws and proclamations removing the civil rights of Jews. It is true that very few church men, or civilians, protested openly about the round-up and deportation of 76,000 Jews in 1942-44. The arrests, in the first year, were carried out almost exclusively by French police on the orders of French officials. The Vichy authorities managed, at first, to win exemption for Jews of French nationality but even this was lifted later.

None the less, many thousands of French people did risk

their lives to hide Jews and to help them to escape. The 80,000 Jews who died - including those who died of cold and hunger in French-run detention camps in France - represented about one quarter of the pre-war community of French Jews and exiled Jews. This figure is horrific enough.

But the persecution was not carried out as thoroughly in France as in other countries, where it was directly administered by the German occupiers. Partly this was because the Vichy authorities became markedly less efficient in arresting Jews in 1943-44, when Germany started to lose the war. By 1944, the SS was forced to take over because it was disappointed with the flow of Jews in Poland.

For whatever reason, luck, help from their neighbours, administrative foot-dragging - about 175,000 Jews remained in France throughout the war.

The country's Jewish community has grown enormously in the last 50 years, swollen by emigration from eastern Europe and former French colonies in North Africa.

There are now 600,000 Jews in France, almost double the population of 1939, making the French community the largest in Western Europe and one of the largest in the world.

Although anti-Semitism certainly persists Jews are present and successful in almost all areas of French society.

Several members of the present government are of Jewish origin, including the economy minister, Dominique Strauss-Kahn.



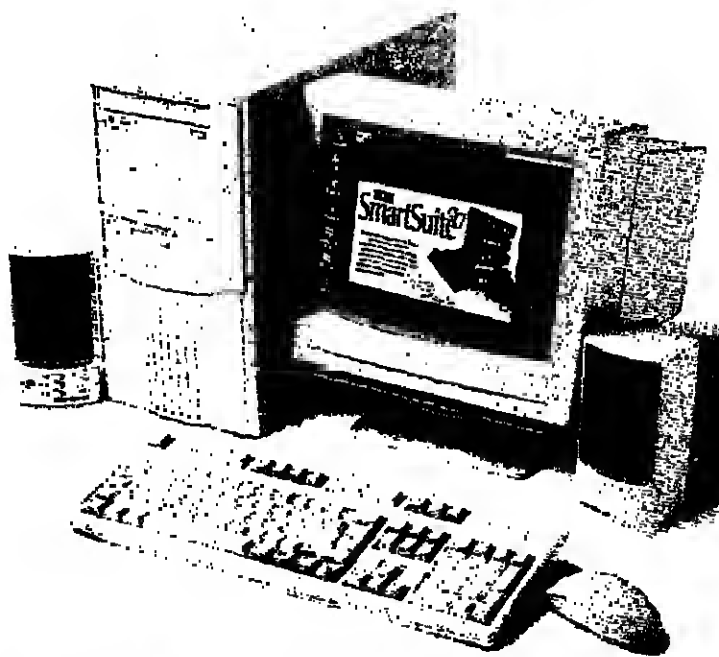
Dominique Strauss-Kahn: Leading French Jew

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Hamas chief says revenge attacks are the only defence

EXCLUSIVE

Israel and the US say Yasser Arafat, the Palestinian leader, is at last clamping down on Hamas, the Islamic militant organisation behind most of the suicide bomb attacks. But Dr Abdel Aziz Rantisi, the leader of Hamas in Gaza, reveals that suicide bombs are the Palestinians' only effective weapon against Israel, though for the moment he counsels Hamas members to be patient.

The sound of the kiss echoed around Israel like a gunshot. Last month every Israeli newspaper pictured Dr Abdel Aziz Rantisi, a founder of Hamas and one of its principal leaders, being kissed on the cheek by Mr Arafat.

"It was a routine kiss, not a political one," says Dr Rantisi, a 50-year-old paediatrician, his dark beard flecked with white, in an interview with *The Inde-*

pendent as he sat in the forecourt of his house in Khan Younis at the southern end of the Gaza Strip. "It was a Palestinian unity conference. Arafat also kissed other delegates."

But Dr Rantisi knows that there is more to it than that. Since he was released from an Israeli jail in January, he has been the effective leader of Hamas in the occupied territories. And the precise distance between Hamas and Mr Arafat is of consuming interest to Israel and the United States because it is Hamas whose suicide bombs, again and again since 1994, have determined relations between Israelis and Palestinians.

Dr Rantisi is quick to disclaim - and this is accepted by Israel and the US - that he has no operational knowledge of suicide bombings. But it is he who ultimately determines if the bombing campaign goes ahead or is called off.

Despite the arrest of some 70 Hamas members in Gaza and the West Bank, and the closure of Hamas clinics and social centres, on the insistence of Israel and the US, Dr Rantisi makes clear that the bombings, which he refers to as "operations", will go on.

His justification for the suicide attacks is simple enough.

He says the Palestinians and the Arab world are as weak as at any time in their history. Only suicide bombings redress the balance. He says: "Every Palestinian knows that, without revenge attacks, massacres like that at Hebron [when Baruch Goldstein, an Israeli settler, killed 29 Muslim worshippers in the mosque in 1994], would happen more often."

He speaks also of the assassination of Yahya Ayyash, the chief Hamas bomb-maker,

BY PATRICK COCKBURN

by Israel in Gaza as justifying the suicide bombs which killed 58 Israelis last year.

In the more immediate future Dr Rantisi, speaking what he calls "Egyptian English", which he learnt as a trainee doctor in Alexandria in the 1960s, seems to hint at a curtailment of attacks. He says: "Any kind of conflict between Palestinians will be disastrous." In reacting to the arrests and closures of Hamas institutions he says: "We will be patient."

Israel claims he has received an amber if not a red light from Mr Arafat against more attacks. Hamas is certainly under

heavy pressure from the Palestinian Authority. Formed in early 1988, it grew out of the Muslim Brotherhood and its network of supporters in the mosques and Islamic social institutions. Israel has always held that these form "an infrastructure" from which the suicide bombers ultimately come. In the past week Mr Arafat has closed 16 Islamic institutions in Gaza, on which some 50 - 60,000 poorer Gazans relied for relief.

Dr Rantisi says: "They are destroying the infrastructure not of Hamas, but of the Palestinian people." He doesn't think the present clamp down will damage Hamas politically and this is confirmed by local observers.

One, who wanted to remain anonymous, said: "Palestinian public opinion has a different attitude this year to the suicide bombings than it did last. Then many people said to Hamas: 'You are destroying our future'. Now they say: 'What are we getting out of this ridiculous peace process?'"

At the same time Hamas is a less powerful organisation than it used to be in Gaza. This is mainly the result of mass arrests after the suicide bombs which made Benjamin Netanyahu prime minister in 1996.

Some 1,200 Hamas members were arrested by Mr Arafat's men. It lost control of many mosques whose imams must now be licensed by the Palestinian Authority. It no longer has its old influence in Gaza's Islamic university.

Dr Rantisi is philosophical about this, having spent much of the past nine years in prison as well as one year as a deportee in Lebanon. He says the Palestinians and the Arabs are in a peculiarly weak position, arguing that it was a bad moment for Mr Arafat to negotiate the Oslo accords with Israel. He adds: "One day people will say there used to be a great power called America. Everything changes."

In practice the calculations of Hamas are probably more immediate. Like other Palestinian political groups they are preparing themselves for the day Mr Arafat dies.

They also probably calculate that Mr Netanyahu does not intend to implement the Interim Agreement phase of the Oslo accord, signed by the previous Israeli government in 1995, under which Israel would withdraw from most of the West Bank. Therefore, Israel will never offer Mr Arafat a big enough reward to repeat the mass arrests - in effect intermeum without trial - of Hamas supporters which he carried out last year.

It is very unlikely that Hamas will abandon suicide bombing. It is a cheap and horribly effective way of using its Islamic commitment to determine relations between Israel and the Palestinians. Nor is its military wing, the Izzedine al-Qassem, likely to lack the means to carry out attacks.

A suicide bomber requires only a willingness to kill himself and a minimum of equipment, training and military support. He does not really require the "infrastructure" which Israel is insisting that Mr Arafat dismantle. And, as Dr Rantisi points out, in the shanty towns of Gaza and the West Bank, there are thousands of hither young Palestinians who have little enough to live for.



Telling gesture: Yasser Arafat kisses Dr Abdel Aziz Rantisi, a founder and leading figure in Hamas, on the cheek during the Palestinian unity conference. Photograph: AP

Netanyahu refuses to stop the spread of Jewish settlements

Within hours of Madeleine Albright, the US Secretary of State, announcing that she had "arrested the downward spiral" in relations between Israel and the Palestinians, Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli Prime Minister, was emphasising how little progress had been made.

Israel has agreed to discuss the concept of a "time-out" in the building of Jewish settlements in the territories occupied since 1967. Mr Netanyahu said: "You know we are building in the settlements, enabling natural growth of the settlements and I don't intend to change our policy."

Negotiations were broken off in March when Mr Netanyahu started to build a settlement for 6,500 Jews at Har Homa, called Jabal Abu Ghneim, in between Palestinian districts in East Jerusalem. Mrs Albright said she hoped "to have been able to take a small step forward" by announcing renewed talks in the US.

The first set of talks start next week and will cover implementation of the Interim Agreement of 1995 signed by the previous Israeli govern-



Protest: Schoolgirls join a rally at Erez on the Gaza Strip against Benjamin Netanyahu's decision not to change his policy on Jewish settlements. Photograph: Reuters

ment. Issues to be discussed include the opening of a Palestinian port and airport and safe passage between Gaza and the West Bank. The Palestinian Authority also wants Palestinian prisoners released.

A second set of talks, on 13 October, will deal with the concept of a "time-out" in Jewish settlement building. It will also cover Israeli withdrawals from the West Bank and a shift to final status talks deal-

ing with the core issues in dispute between Israel and the Palestinians. However, it seems that Mr Netanyahu wants to stall the implementation of the present stage of the Oslo accords, under which Israel would effectively end its occupation of much of the West Bank.

Mr Netanyahu has insisted that Yasser Arafat, the Palestinian leader, act against Hamas, the Islamic militant organisation behind suicide bombings.

He said: "If they fight terror we will continue with the peace. If they don't, we won't." Israeli officials say Mr Arafat's security men have in recent days been rounding up "the sharks and not just small fry".

Israeli press reports say Israeli security forces have identified Adek Awadallah, a resident of Ramallah, as the organiser of the suicide bombings which killed 20 Israelis in Mahane Yehuda market and Ben Yehuda pedestrian mall.

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Wilde: about the man

He, famously, had nothing to declare except his genius. And, to judge by the new crop of plays and films, neither have we. But exactly which Oscar are we going Wilde about: the flamboyant bisexual or the subversive aesthete?

Stephen Fry as the latest celluloid Oscar Wilde? In one way it's ironic casting: the man who could not be persuaded to flee to the Continent played by the man who could not restrain himself from doing precisely that. Two years' hard labour in Reading Gaol for the one; permanent parole from *Cell Mates* for the other.

The arts seem to be running Wilde this month (or should that be the other way round?). In addition to the Julian Mitchell-scripted movie, which opens on 17 October, there are three Wilde-related premieres. At the Abbey Theatre, Dublin, Thomas Kilroy's *The Secret Fall of Constance Wilde* gives the usually silent, suffering wife an unexpectedly complex voice. At the Arts Theatre in London, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* – a cryptic confession of the author's double life – is currently getting the musical treatment from Australian composer, David Reeves. Most intriguingly of all, Wilde crops up as an alternative approach to loving and living in *The Invention of Love*, Tom Stoppard's new play (opening tonight) about a rather different kind of homosexual, the fastidious classical scholar and poet, AE Housman.

Resolutely the reverse of a glamourous, Housman is not gay icon material. It is doubtful that, even under the most expert hypnosis, he could have been induced to walk down Piccadilly with a poppy or a lily in his "medieval" hand. Dubbing Wilde the "Irish Roland Barthes", the critic-playwright Terry Eagleton sees a foreshadowing of contemporary cultural theory in his impish exposure of the arbitrariness of what we take to be natural. Such poststructuralism and deconstruction would have seemed the starkest insanity to Housman. Not for him the "Death of the Author", but a lifetime of patiently endeavouring to recover what the Latin authors actually wrote from the intricate inanities of textual corruption.

Despite their dissimilarities and the fact that they never met, the two writers are however linked. For a year, their Oxford careers overlapped. In 1895, the year of Wilde's trial, Housman had a non-coincidental flush of poetic creativity. His *A Shropshire Lad* was published while Wilde was incarcerated and Wilde's friend Robert Ross would, during prison visits, recite to him some of the poems from memory. When he was released, Housman sent him a copy. It looks a case of reciprocal inspiration: Wilde's uncharacteristic *Ballad of Reading Gaol* would have been far less thinkable without the Housman example. Some men aren't cut out to be tragic figures. That is their tragedy. Some men are. That is theirs.

One key difference between the dandiacal Wilde and the downish Housman is that the love of Housman's life was not the death of him. Moses Jackson, a decent, totally heterosexual scientist and keen amateur athlete, would have run a three-minute mile from the likes of that manipulative tart, Lord Alfred Douglas, aka "Bosie".

As Stephen Fry's Wilde, rushing back to the arms of Jude Law after a suffocatingly sweet family Christmas, declares in the new film: "Oh, Bosie, you're my catastrophe. My doom. Everyone says so, even me." A fatal weakness which it must have required a certain strength of character to persist with to the end, Douglas allowed Wilde to realise his nature. A man of character who politely distanced himself from the adoring Housman and predeceased him, Jackson permitted Housman to repress his.

Hence, the opposite directions in which their art looks. Those risky close-to-

home comedies and stories by Wilde are flamboyantly flirty dress rehearsals for disaster. For Housman, in a sense, the disaster had already (and less showily) happened. Pessimism, nostalgia, the indecorum of romantic impulse played off against the decorum of classical precedent – these haunting, lad-filled poems truly grasp "the nettle on the graves of lovers / that banged themselves for love".

The Invention of Love is, we hear, a dream-memory play – the disordered thoughts of the dying septuagenarian scholar who, at long last, gets to meet his Oscar. So, if the Wilde who visits Stoppard's hero in his dreams turns out to be insouciant, quipping "Aesthetic Self-Realisation" to Housman's "Scrupled Repression", it will illustrate how we all tend to simplify and refashion this endlessly contradictory figure to suit the psychological or ideological needs of the moment.

For, in truth, the nervous strain of being Oscar Wilde must have been, at times, appalling. On the cover of Alan Sinfield's *The Wilde Century* – a learned look at the cultural construction of ideas of "feminism" and its opposites – the photograph of Oscar is re-appareled in a "QUEER AS FUCK" sweatshirt and it sits on him about as comfortably as would a Manchester United football strip. Just how liberated was he? Do we have a right to expect him to have been?

There's a scene in the movie where his friend Robert Ross quizzes Wilde about his attraction to young boys: "What would you say if someone wanted to go to bed with your son?" To the reply that Cyril is only

eight, Ross says, "Yes, but what would you say if he were 18?" Wilde ponders. "Nothing. He must do as his nature dictates. As I only wish I had done."

A noble sentiment, though one suspects that the historical Wilde would have been given longer pause by the question, just as you suspect that Ross here cites the current age of consent for gay men in England (and not, say, 15) because of the resurfacing bigotries that identify homosexuality with paedophilia. In *The Secret Fall of Constance Wilde*, Douglas even has to defend himself against the suspicion that he has been interfering with Mrs Wilde's sons.

Works of art about Wilde need to steer a tricky course. On the one hand, it's wrong to patronise the past by planing down its differences from the present. On the other, Wilde's story locks into so many contemporary preoccupations that it inevitably puts the present on trial too, and must be seen to do so. Julian Mitchell, who wrote the screenplay for Brian Gilbert's movie, is right to argue that the sexes led more separate lives in that male, clubland society and also right to show in a very sustained, if clunking manner that his wife and children are as much victims of this tragedy as Wilde himself.

In the past, a Wilde biopic would have permitted itself one scene where the hero was seen giving his children rare (in both senses) "quality time" and then sloping off sharply to "feast with panthers". It may well have had him regaling them with a bit of *The Selfish Giant*, that parable of the giant excluder who excludes himself from happiness. But fatherhood and its responsibilities constitute a big, painful topic nowadays, so the staggered reading-out of this very story becomes the linking thread of *Wilde*.

As in *The Secret Fall*, where Oscar, Constance and Bosie are shown to be drawn together because each is the victim of a variously abusive father, there's the sense of Douglas as rival son and lover. Kilroy's

Bosie pettishly, self-servingly – but not perhaps impudently – declares that the dotting Wilde, forever pressing money into his hands, is just as bad as the mad Marquis of Queensbury: neither of them is prepared to look on him as a human being. It must say something about our times that Wilde the bisexual, devoted and neglectful father

The importance of being Oscar: Wilde posing for the camera and as portrayed on screen by Stephen Fry (photo: Liam Daniel)

can find himself as much the focus of our attentions as Wilde the subversive aesthete.

The consideration with which all of these works treat Douglas and his compulsion to use Wilde in a vendetta against Queensbury must have involved a steadfast refusal to be swayed by the even more unedifying spectacle of his later life. As Philip Hoare's recent book *Wilde's Last Stand* richly documents, 23 years after the fatal trial, Wilde was effectively put in the dock all over again during the trial for libel of Pemberton Billing, a deranged Tory MP who claimed that Germany was winning the War by the novel method of blackmailing the 40,000 high-ranking English homosexuals it had on its list. Bosie took to the witness stand and loyally declared his ex-lover the greatest force for evil in the past 350 years.

He ended his days, amazingly enough, in a relationship with the famous and famously difficult family planning expert, Dr Marie Stopes – "an arrangement," as Muriel Spark has dryly put it, "which I imagine would satisfy any woman's craving for birth control". A play that looked back at Wilde and Nineties values from the perspective of this bizarre 1940s ménage would be a fascinating addition to this Wilde proliferating sub-genre. Over to you, Alan Bennett?

The Invention of Love opens tonight at the Cottesloe, RNT, London SE1 (0171-928 2252). *Dorian* is at the Arts Theatre, Great Newport St, London WC2 (0171-836 2132)



How a nod and a wink changed a writer's life for ever

Christopher Hampton, the playwright and translator, recalls how film-directing made him an easier person to live with, but gave him a few nightmares as well.

It was terrifying – but directing changed my life. When Mike Newell, with whom I had worked on the script for *Carrington*, backed out of directing the film at the last minute, my name was put forward. Reluctantly I agreed to think about it. By coincidence – or design – Emma Thompson [the film's star] phoned me a couple of days later and made the same suggestion. I was terrified of messing it up and not doing justice to the actors or the material.

The honeymoon of *Carrington* and Ralph Partridge, whom she married under pressure from Lytton Strachey, took place in Venice – in fact

all three of them went on honeymoon together. For logistical reasons, it was decided to start with two days' shooting in Italy. At five in the morning, the boat arrived to take me to the set. I felt a curious mixture of terror and exhilaration: something was about to happen that would fundamentally alter my life.

I began my directorial career lying in the bottom of a gondola, shouting at the camera crew and at a real-life gondolier. Lytton's line, as he flirted with this handsome gondolier, was: "I shall spend all my honeymoons here." I wanted the gondolier to wink back at Jonathan Pryce, who was playing Lytton. Unfortunately, my Italian was non-existent and the gondolier didn't speak any English. Finally, I discovered that the Italian for a suggestive wink is *occholino*. It was explained that, at the right moment, I would shout the word and our gondolier would wink

at Jonathan. So, at just the right moment, I shouted "occholino" but he took absolutely no notice. I shouted it again and finally a third time and still nothing. I cut, and when we arrived at the landing stage, I got the interpreter to discover whether the problem had been my pronunciation. After a lengthy confab in Italian, he returned and told me: "He doesn't think it's in his character!" I gave up on the wink, and it wasn't until somewhere around the second week of shooting that I actually began to believe I could be a director.

The famous banal observation is that it is fabulously boring to visit a movie set. But the only person who isn't bored is the director, because they're being bombarded with questions, suggestions and problems – 15 hours a day. That is as far removed from my job as a writer as could possibly be imagined. For 25 years I have sat with a



bit of paper, which is very lonely. You might imagine that directing is the most active profession you could possibly take up – on the contrary, you are a reactor. Although you have your script, which is your blueprint, there are an enormous number of people dis-

cussing it with you. If you are open to all that, it is tremendously enjoyable. One of the benefits of being older was not to be afraid of saying: "I don't know, what do you think?"

All that negotiating with my colleagues made me easier to live with. When I was work-

ing with Stephen Frears on *Dangerous Liaisons*, I went to France for 10 weeks because he likes the writer to be on set. I became so obsessive with the project that I ceased to exist outside of it. I became less and less communicative, only relating to Stephen. I would re-

A new direction: 'My principal lesson, that day in Venice... was to hold my nose and jump'

Photograph: Philip Meech

turn home at weekends and my friends and family found me very difficult and remote. When I was directing *Carrington*, I was equally obsessed but in a different way to when I was on set as just a writer. Directing helped my self-confidence a lot; I'd been rather diffident in the past. I've always wanted to be liked and people who are indifferent to the feelings of others are not tremendously attractive to me. My instinct was always to let people have their head and to play the good policeman, using the director to enforce what I wanted. My principal lesson, that day in Venice, was the need to overcome my fear – to hold my nose and jump.

Since starting to direct, I have a new type of nightmare:

a couple of nights ago, I dreamt that I was on set for the first day of shooting and I couldn't remember what the film was about – a new set of anxieties along with the pleasures. Yet it has made me feel good about myself and has been extremely liberating. I'm now even more open to new ideas.

When *Carrington* came out, I told people I couldn't possibly direct anything but my own scripts. Now I'm finding myself quite tempted. What's more, I could possibly learn something. You should never stop learning – that's when the arteries harden and atrophy sets in.

I think *Carrington* saved me from the famous mid-life crisis and invigorated me – because 48 wasn't too late to start something new and 65 won't be either.

Christopher Hampton's version of Ibsen's *An Enemy of the People* is currently in repertory at the Olivier, Royal National Theatre, London SE1 (0171-928 2252)

Interview: Andrew G Marshall

Amidst the flashbulbs, only two true stars ...



Rude girls: Owen Gaster



Bella Freud



Copperwheat Blundell



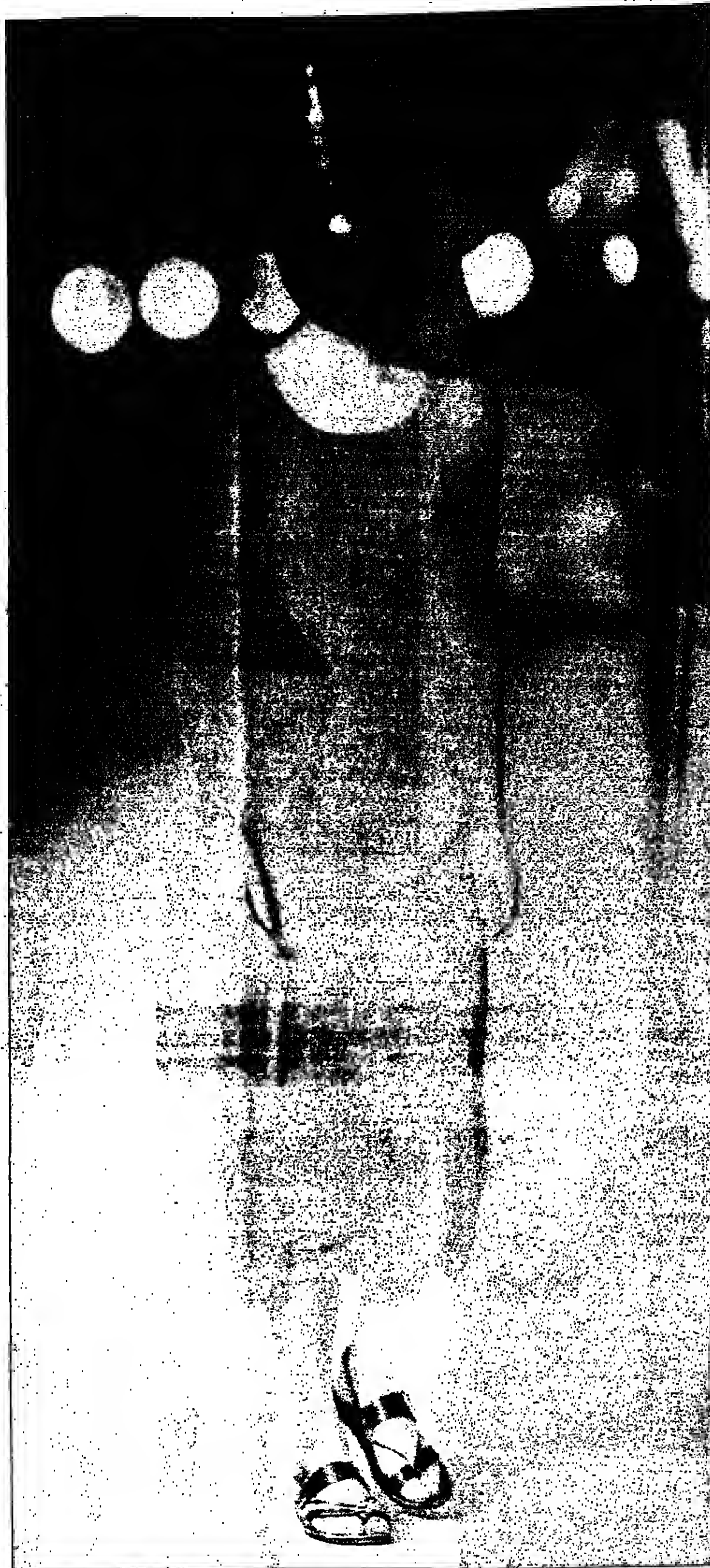
Eighties trash: Red or Dead



Patrick Cox



Pearce Fiorida



Hussein Chalayan's cocoon dress with rosewood helmet: a lesson in pure design at its most esoteric

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Antonio Berardi and Hussein Chalayan shone out as the main attractions of London Fashion Week. Tamsin Blanchard explains why, and previews what you may or may not be wearing next summer. Photographs: Ben Elwes

It's 10.20 on Monday night at the Brixton Academy. "ANTONIO BERARDI SOLD OUT", reads the neon canopy outside. A rumour spreads around the assembled crowd of press, buyers, family, friends and groupies that Kate Moss has only just arrived from the last show, Bella Freud's, held down the road at The Fridge. "She's probably been sat at McDonald's for the last hour," groans one fashion editor. For once, nobody really minds the one-and-a-half-hour wait. Antonio Berardi has flown in from Lord G, his favourite DJ from his New York haunt, Café con Leche, a Latin house club held on Sunday nights. This is the build-up of excitement everybody has been waiting for all week: a fusion of club culture, music, theatre and high fashion that is sure to make the pulse race.

The red plush curtain rises, and out steps Naomi Campbell - her first appearance at Fashion Week - in a sensational lacework dress edged in long, cream lace-maker's bobbins. It was fitted to within a fraction of Naomi's own skin; she was sewn into it and unpicked out of it again backstage.

Theo came Kate Moss in a lace print suit, a ruffled flamenco dress with intricate basket-weave shoulder strap, and Stella Tennant to a multicoloured, crystal-sequined Las Vegas trash black satin suit, by Swarovski.

In my dreams, I wanted to buy lots of it. In reality, I know I could never afford it. Clothes this beautifully wrought, with such fine attention to detail - specially woven fabrics, hand-embroidered jackets, beaded cut flower corsages blooming from shoulders, and fragile, glass-blown flowers and petals tinkling on wood-soled shoes - disappear off the clothing budget scale. For Berardi, the 28-year-old star of London's fashion pack, designs clothes that gather together some of the most talented craftspeople he can find, from lace-makers in Sicily, to Mr Pearl the master corset-maker, Manolo Blahnik the shoe designer, and Stephen Jones the milliner.

While Berardi's was an exercise in fashion showmanship, craftsman's image-making and wishful day-dreaming, the modernist Hussein Chalayan's, shown on Saturday night at an art gallery in London's East End, was a lesson in pure design at its most esoteric. The collection, simply entitled "Between", continued in the same vein as his last, with futuristic cocoons of dévoré cotton jersey, graphic Spirograph prints, and a colour palette of white, black, navy and vivid red. Arms were trapped inside the cocoons for the show, but the dresses are designed so that you

can slip them out through the armholes for complete freedom of movement.

Chalayan's collection touched on themes of the Orient, Islam, isolation, definitions of space and light, mummification and convent girls. He has his own unique way of looking at clothes, and his references become completely abstract and at times, surreal. But the wearer need not get bogged down with any of that, and can simply enjoy wearing Chalayan's Zen-like white cotton shirts, a plain, circular-cut linen jacket, a geometric dévoré dress, or a silk dress with a soft fin of fabric falling like water down the front and back, in red so bright that it vibrates. In a quieter and cooler way than Berardi, Chalayan's show was just as much a performance, complete with a live string quartet.

These two totally different collections were the highlights of London Fashion Week - along with Alexander McQueen's strong tailoring; Clements Ribeiro's sequined tulle and cashmere, lace embroideries, sexy backless dresses and functional khaki pants; Sooja Nuttall's slouchy suits and perfect dresses; and the debut show of Matthew Williamson, whose small but exquisite collection of delicate embroideries and divine beadwork in neo colours stand out. For the best of the rest, we'll let the pictures speak for themselves - and you can enjoy the hot spots or low points (depending on your viewpoint) of British Fashion Week from the comfort of your armchair.

17/LONDON FASHION

هكذا من الأصل

... one for fantasy, one for wearing



Antonio Berardi: delicacy in lace



The best of the rest: Clements Ribeiro



Sonja Nuttall



Matthew Williamson



Alexander McQueen



Surface interest: Lainey Keogh



Justin Oh



Ghost



Tristan Webber



Modern classics: Ally Capellino



John Rocha



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IN1/10

My son had meningitis at three days. The consultant insisted on treating...

Last week the Royal College of Paediatrics issued new guidelines on when a child should be allowed to die. For loving mother Kate Sainsbury, they came 11 years late

My first born child, Louis, developed meningitis three days after birth. There was a lung delay before diagnosis and treatment and as an informed layman, I guessed how devastating the effects were likely to be in such a small baby and asked that Louis be allowed to die peacefully, without treatment.

The consultant insisted on treating. There was no debate, no consultation, only a social worker detailed next day to reiterate the sanctity of life argument. Several nurses, seeing how I loved Louis, how I sat by his incubator night and day, expressed their sympathy with my view.

Louis lived. Next week he is eleven. He is slim and handsome, active and very quick

and very brain-damaged. He can't talk, can't count, can't get dressed, has limited understanding, wears nappies, is unaware of dangers, needs careful supervision at all times. His hands are like a toddler's, he can't construct, can't draw, his attention span is limited to a few minutes of hand-brain co-ordination. Additionally, a resulting brain abscess developed in part of the brain responsible for sight and Louis became autistic, trapped within his own senses without a channel to the outside world.

In spite of his intellectual damage, Louis has great capacity for feelings, good and bad. I love him dearly, with a fierce protection against all the harms that can befall him. In the last few years, he and I within our relationship have broken through the autism, have found a way to communicate, to reassure each other of our feelings, to enjoy each other's company - yet the responsibility of caring for Louis is too great for me single-handed and

I rely on a range of services provided by the state.

The state has taken over the role of father-provider in all families with children whose handicaps require outside agencies to be involved. Unlike the father model projected by the child support agency, actual state provision for handicapped children is a lottery. The same social worker who had urged me to accept the consultant's belief in the sanctity of life, admitted years later that there are twice the number of handicapped children as funds available to care for them and only those parents that shout loudest get the help.

That is no moral basis on which to provide care but politicians do not want to be reminded of this incompatibility. The first one I spoke to said, "Don't come here, we can't afford you," and the second one declined to address the moral issues.

It is the point of paradox where a market economy meets principles. Logically,

principles dictate that each child receives a lifelong financial commitment from the state, which is personalised and valid wherever he goes in the country; a market economy would have demand and supply of services in equilibrium.

And so we muddle along with the parents and the teachers and the carers and the children only just coping most of the time. And then the quality of care depends on the individuals who provide it: on their enthusiasm, generosity, imagination, how they perceive their standing in society.

But isn't there something familiar about this *laissez-faire* situation? The various agencies employed in the welfare of children invoke the state as an authority, just as once God was called upon, but there is no single voice of State to validate their judgements, only value-laden angles from various professions.

These children are the *kapa cocha* of our society: victims sacrificed to ideals of equality, justice, the sanctity of life. But

stripped of celebration, sacrificed on the quiet. There is no public celebration of the particular qualities of Louis: his intensity of focus, his innocence, his joy in making connections. There is little public acknowledgement of the qualities of tolerance, understanding, patience, imagination, that carers develop.

I don't want Louis to die now. I have been enriched to have known and loved him and to have learned so much from him. I have journeyed from a time when I still hoped not to have to go through with the burden of caring, to the present when I care in order to make him happy. Yet there are always windows of realism in maternal love, and if Louis' life hung in the balance again, and at the time it seemed right to say, "For his sake let him die". I hope that this time, I as his mother would have a major say in Louis' treatment and would be supported in my decision.

To be a mother is to love an individual more than a principle, to be aware of the

myriad details that makes up an individual: and to insist on the accumulation of particularities rather than the reduction to logical ubiquity. I want to be convinced that real progress has been made towards accepting the particular, in this newly published report on the care of ill babies and circumstances in which it may be right to let them die.

For the agencies of the state are deeply paternalistic and self-serving, by definition organised so as to serve Everyman not the individual. In the past they tended to exert a pressure on those they employed so as to stamp out individuality and human values. Now there is a new generation of caring, sensitive doctors who are more attuned to the individual features of a case. They need to be supported and defended from the hardliners who sacrifice individuals to principle and the principles of the hardliners must be shown to be only a small part of the vast network of concern that surrounds a child's life.

BELOVED AND BONK

Diary of a divorce



We've now got to the stage where Professionals are being called in to dismember the body of our marriage and distribute its various limbs and organs appropriately. It's not like doing a nice neat hutchery job, slice it up into hocks and hams, knuckles and trotters, two of each for both of us. No, it's more like a student dissection - pick apart one bit this week then shove the lot in formalin and swot up the next section ready for next week.

We are, to use the proper term, in the financial disclosure stage. This sounds like something vaguely racy: it makes me think of gauzy underwear, slightly soiled. (That could be the five weeks without sex of course.) In fact it's just boring... it means I have to acquaint myself with insurance policies profiles, endowment mortgage reliefs, and financial projectiles. It means knowing exactly how much I spent last month at the garden centre. All things which I thought were the reason for having a conscientious husband who spent Sunday nights doing the hills - so I didn't have to think about them. Like I don't have to think about how to open the bonnet of my car because I know where the garage is.

Of course, as part of my new found freedom, I have to examine all the hills including those for the phone. I realise that, for the last several months, Beloved's hill-paying on Sunday nights has been a secondary activity to calling Bonk... every 3 minutes from 10pm to midnight in 30 second bursts of passion interrupted by me carrying washing up and down stairs. They did get one phone call that wasn't coitus interruptus... 93 minutes late one night. He must have bosed down the phone and steam-cleaned the orthopaedic desk chair before I woke up the next morning.

It does of course suggest that we are in the presence of genuine passion here, not just two people colluding with Bob Hoskins. I mean, I've never been on the phone for 93 minutes to anyone, ever. Not even when my mate Jenny used to describe what she'd been doing with her boyfriend in the back of his car, in enormous detail. As I was doing A level biology at the time, I was qualified to tell her whether any of it would make her pregnant. Considering where the sperm went (and how much of it there was) I'm surprised it didn't make his mother pregnant when she sat in the driver's seat the next morning.

Anyway, an hour and a half on the phone tells me that Beloved and Bonk are truly hot. And seeing it there listed on a BT bill made it all terribly real. I thought I'd got over the carpet chewing stage but a minute after spotting that little item on the page Bunny, my daughter, was on the phone to our neighbour: "Mummy's lying on the floor making a funny noise. Can you come round?"

The reality factor is the worst bit of all the form-filling involved in this bloody divorce business. Seeing the whole of the last 20 years of my life summarised in a couple of columns of sums and a sheet or two of sparsely-covered A4 is enough to get me right back to winning the Juliet Stevenson Shield for Emotional Expression every time I crawl in through the door of the lawyer's office.

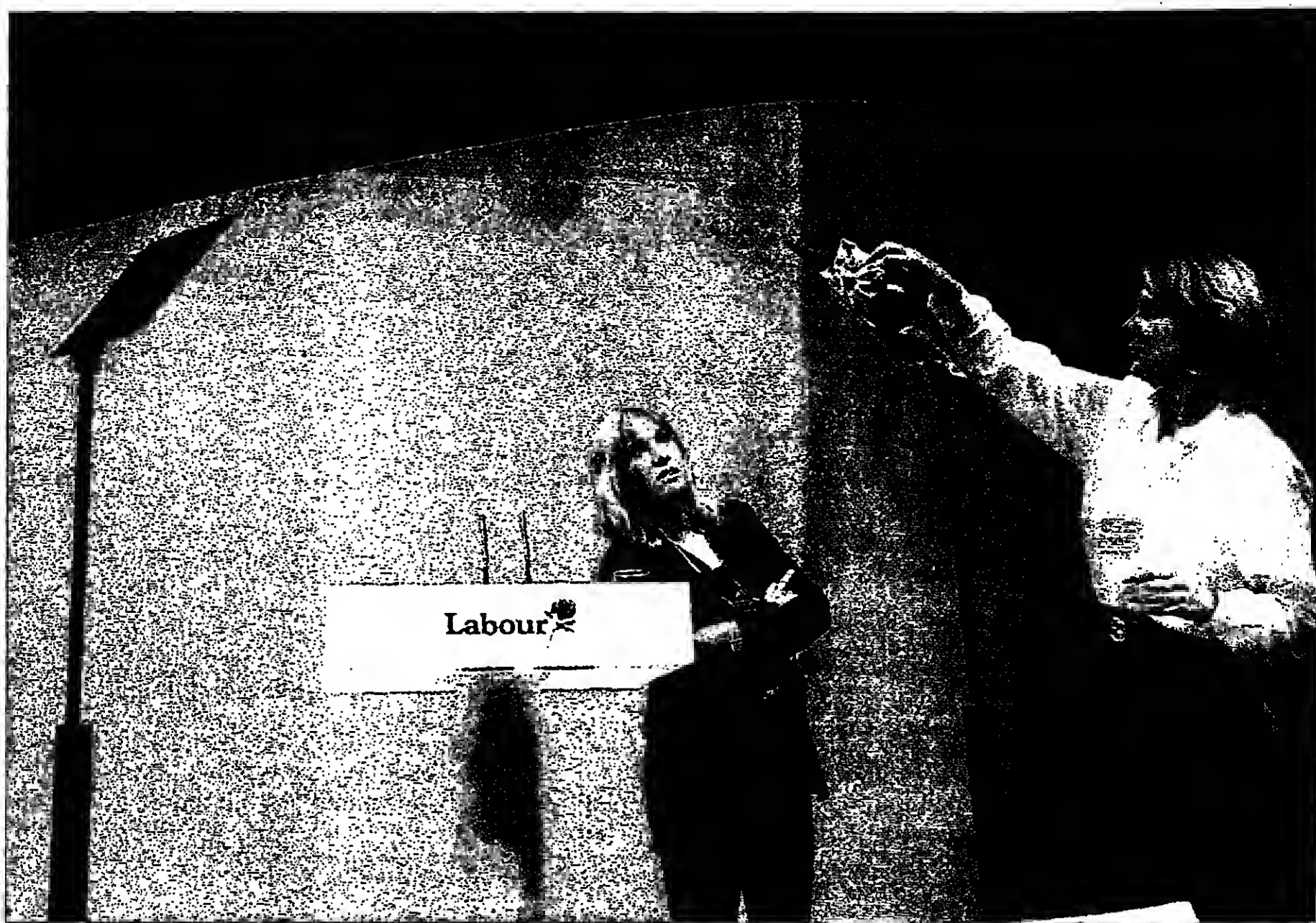
Luckily my lawyer is a tough cookie: an American gal who could whip the nylon off her beautiful legs to mend a puncture and do a tracheotomy with a biro. Sometimes I think I want her babies.

She understands all about endowment profile policy insurance projectiles, (and she now knows how I indulged myself with two new varieties of peony and a chic pair of secateurs). She spots it when Beloved is about to do something sneaky and prevents me from telling him to put his money where the sun won't shine. Because, of course, that's what I want to do... if I can't have him as my husband I want him and everything to do with him from joint account to hire purchase agreement to be beamed up to Alpha Centauri. Sadly I can't afford the luxury of severing myself from Beloved as if he were a gangrenous limb, because having spent the last several years fitting work between making chocolate cakes with Smarties on top and reading the entire *Narnia* series out loud, my earning power is somewhat impaired. So I have to think of my erstwhile lover and friend as nothing more than a meal ticket.

Unless of course my current efforts to give my career the kiss of life actually work, and I suddenly become terrifically successful. This is a most cheering fantasy (along with haemorrhoids for Bonk). I take Beloved out to lunch, picking him up in my Saab soft-top convertible, dressed entirely in Nicole Fehri (does she make knickers, I wonder?) I listen sympathetically to the tale of his failed relationship and ruined career. I take him home, drop him at the door and drive off (having discreetly slipped him £20). And without even looking in the mirror I know he is standing in the road, watching longingly as I disappear.

Ah... I think I may have just found a substitute for sex.

Stevie Morgan



Jane Smith, daughter of the late Labour leader John Smith, supervises the cleaning of the lectern prior to Tony Blair's speech at Conference yesterday. Photograph: Brian Harris

Gordon's with Sarah, Robin's with Gaynor - it's full of young women. That's new

At Brighton, a new sight: a governing party that is living life as normal human beings know it. A senior cabinet minister with a girlfriend, not a national sensation and, for the first time in government, young women are affecting the ether. Modernisation? asks Fran Abrams. Or feminisation?

In yesterday's *Daily Mirror*, signs of the times. Set aside for the moment the fact that they are so New Labour they don't even mention Peter Mandelson's NEC defeat on the front page. Turn to page five - two huge pictures: one of Gordon Brown with his girlfriend, Sarah Macaulay, and the other of Robin Cook with Gaynor Regan, for whom he left his wife last month. But no apocalyptic headlines. A discreet caption under the Robin Cook picture explained that the Foreign Secretary was taking "a leisurely stroll near the seatfront at Brighton". And no tooth-sucking over the presence of the Chancellor's girlfriend: Mr Brown was named hero of the day for his hard hitting speech on the economy.

The diary of the *Daily Mail*, most purveyor of tabloids and fervent upholder of family values, described Ms Regan as "quite fanciable". And added: "Come on, Mr Cook, let's see much more of your new love." Clearly we are not in the same era where Cecil Parkinson saw



Angela Eagle, whose self-induced outing caused barely a ripple on the smooth surface of New Labour's image

his ambitious torpedoed because his former secretary was pregnant with his baby. That was 14 years, and a whole world away.

During the summer, Jane Kennedy, a Labour whip, separated from her husband and Angela Eagle, Minister of State for the Environment, announced that she was gay. Neither caused more than the mildest stir. Mr Cook remained top of the poll in his party's National Executive elections this year despite his marriage break-

up, even increasing his vote by several thousand.

Tony Blair is a conservative on moral matters and yet the modernising culture of new Labour has somehow pervaded even this area of our lives. When Cabinet meetings are run on a first-name basis, and we are encouraged to see our statesmen and women as human beings, revelations about private lives do not create the same waves.

Events which would have created shock-waves even in the



Sarah Macaulay, walking out with the Chancellor of the Exchequer and raising no eyebrows

dying days of the Conservative government pass by with barely a ripple.

A cynic would say that Labour's strategists had worked this one out in advance, of course. That watching the drawn-out agonies of the Conservative Party through scandal after purulent revelation, they realised they had to prevent similar damage being done to a future Labour government.

Allowing the new Cabinet to be seen as real, modern human beings with real, modern prob-

lems and traumas was a perfect pre-emptive strike. Those bygone Tory figures only suffered such messy falls because of the height of the pedestals on which they stood. But it would be too simplistic to imagine that even Labour's very clever image-makers could have manipulated their subjects to quite such an extent.

It would also be pointless to even begin to suggest that they could ever have presented the stern, remote public face which served the Tories so well for so

many years, even if they had wanted to try.

The fact is that these are just a very different bunch of people and there is nowhere better to observe it than at Conference. The standard Tory greeting may have been a restrained handshake, but here the sight of ministers - mainly the female ones, it has to be said - greeting acquaintances with lavish hugs and cries of "Darling!" is a common one in the hotel lobbies of an evening.

Old Labour were different again, of course, but their public face was just as remote. And this is less thanks to the modernisation of politics than the feminisation.

The Labour conference, like the House of Commons, has changed its face in recent years. About four fifths of the delegates in Brighton are first-timers, many of them under 30, and a substantial majority are female. Although Labour's 102 women MPs only make up a quarter of the total, they do help to humanise their party's public face.

To suggest that this is their main virtue would be an outrage, of course. Even to say that Labour's women are necessarily more approachable than their male colleagues would also be wrong. But their presence does help to contribute to the public perception that times have moved on.

None of this means, of course, that never again will Labour politicians find their private lives emblazoned across the front pages of the newspapers. But when they do, the chances are the whole business may well be a one-day wonder.

Roy Lichtenstein

Roy Lichtenstein, artist: born New York 27 October 1923; married 1949 Isabel Wilson (two sons; marriage dissolved); 1968 Dorothy Herzka; died New York 29 September 1997.

The veteran Pop artist Roy Lichtenstein built his very considerable fame and fortune on the unlikely foundations of irony and decoration. He was, *par excellence*, an artist with attitude, trading in an unabashedly chic nihilism.

At the outset of his career he was able to shock a highbrow art scene with brazen, seemingly unmediated and uncritical appropriations of the visual detritus of mass culture. *Look Mickey* (1961) was one of the defining images of the new Pop style: Donald Duck out fishing with his friend exclaims "Look, Mickey, I've hooked a big one" in a frame of Disney cartoon exploded on to canvas.

By the time his art matured – if one can use this word in relation to Lichtenstein – the shock turned to bemusement that an artist could continue to produce work within such slight visual and intellectual confines as he had set for himself. Till his dying day, his trademark style remained the cartoon writ large.

In a 1963 interview Lichtenstein established his credentials as a career nihilist with a series of answers as suave, nonchalant and savvy as his art and style always remained. Asked if he was anti-experimental, he replied: "I think so, and anti-cootemptive, anti-nuance, anti-getting-away-from-the-tyranny-of-the-rectangle, anti-movement-and-light, anti-mystery, anti-paint-quality, anti-Zen, and anti all of those brilliant ideas of preceding movements which everyone understands so thoroughly."

Lichtenstein really was Mr Cool. He had none of the complexity and tragic element of Andy Warhol, nor the implicitly critical attitude of Claes Oldenburg or Allen Kaprow (an early mentor). His 1960s

work was read by some as an indictment of consumer culture, but as his career proceeded it became clear that his was far more of a celebration of pop culture than a critique. Actually, though, even to talk of celebration is to over-interpret. Lichtenstein always maintained a stiff upper lip of diffident neutrality. Whether he was parodying old masters or appropriating romance and action comic strips he would go gentle on the originals, as keen to exploit the visual effectiveness of his source material as to debunk it.

Roy Lichtenstein was born in New York City in 1923 and took classes with the great Realist painter Reginald Marsh at the Art Students League in 1940. He completed his studies in the Mid-West, however, staying on to teach at Ohio State University after military service in Europe. He once joked that there didn't seem much going on in New York at the time.

He was quite candid about his desire to cut an image in an art scene dominated by Abstract Expressionism which left little room for a newcomer to do anything shocking. "It was hard to get a painting that was despicable enough so that one would hang it... The one thing everyone hated was commercial art; apparently they didn't hate that enough either."

In his use and adaptation of graphic design within a fine-art context Lichtenstein was supremely skilful; part of his brilliance, in fact, was to make it look as if his appropriation was unmediated. Initially he answered the charge that he did not transform his source material by arguing – shrewdly – that too art transforms: "It doesn't. It just plain forms."

But, apart from the transformation that occurs through dislocation of scale, giving new aesthetic meaning to the expediences of printing technology – the Ben Day dots, the bold, simplified curves – within its new context, Lichtenstein did, as it happens, modify his sources, splicing together various images to form the ready-

made he actually wanted, simplifying captions, idealising features. This was especially the case with his women of the mid-1960s: all-American square-jawed cinematic blondes. And his choice of materials by this stage was already nostalgic for a golden age of mass culture at least a decade anterior.

Lichtenstein's appropriations may have started raw, but they soon became, if not cooked, at least cured. However indignant one is at their banality, his classic works have an undoubted presence, if not aura.

When Lichtenstein finally moved on from the ready-made images to originate his own compositions he retained as his signature style the Ben Day dot and other accoutrements of the comic strip. With this language, at once super-impersonal and unmistakably his own, he was equipped with all the means necessary for endless cycles of pastiche. Where Cézanne set out to redo Poussin after nature, Lichtenstein could redo Picasso, Leger, Matisse, Monet haystacks, Chinese scroll painting, Mondrian, even Hergé (Tintin) after Ben Day.

His most pertinent parody – his best art-world cartoon – was his depictions of beefy, dripping, slapdash abstract expressionist "brushstrokes", meticulously achieved in black outline and pure colour over a "canvas" made up of the inevitable dots.

Because he generally worked in primary colours and his adopted technique entailed bright, clean, emphatic shapes, Lichtenstein had fortuitously – or ingeniously – hit upon a style which blended well with the very high modernism he was at work debunking. His scale, colour and texture actually harmonised with all the strictures of pure abstraction, profoundly ill at ease though Pop Art and painterly abstraction were with one another. Lichtenstein himself believed that "the formalist statement in my work will become clearer in time".

Represented from 1962 by the redoubtable dealer Leo



Career nihilist: Lichtenstein in his New York studio, 1990

Photograph: Schulman-Liaison

Castelli, Lichtenstein settled down to enjoy a career of uninterrupted, seemingly untroubled commercial and institutional success. By the end, he seemed almost to be beyond irony, his reworkings of classical images or his still-lives and interiors were content with their own masterful slick-

ness. (On the other hand, his late works can be seen to be ironic about his own irony!) A "straight" work like *Interior with Built-In Bar*, 1991, exhibited so effectively in a room by itself at the Royal Academy's Pop Art exhibition that year, achieves a classical poise and stasis that belies the insolence

of its banal and reductive means.

By this stage, this comic-strip style was more famous for being Lichtenstein's than for being Benjamin Day's or the mass media's. In a peculiar twist, the ubiquitous had become particular.

— David Cohen

Peter Allen

Peter Dobson Allen, steel manager: born Dewsbury, West Yorkshire 4 January 1931; CBE 1988; married 1956 Janet Thurman (three sons); died London 25 September 1997.

In the 1970s and 1980s it fell to two outstanding Welshmen to manage the sharply declining fortunes of the two major nationalised industries on which industrial Wales largely relied for its living, and to preserve so far as possible a basis for recovery of their industries: one from South Wales through and through, the other acquired from Yorkshire but soon to become as committed a Welshman as any.

The convert was Peter Allen, an outstanding manager in the post-war steel industry, who died on Thursday from injuries sustained in the Southall train smash. He was born in 1931 in Dewsbury and was apprenticed in 1948. After taking a degree in Chemistry at Birmingham University and two years' National Service, he entered management and at 41 became works director at the huge Port Talbot plant in South Wales.

The turning-point in Allen's career came in 1976 when he was appointed managing director of the Welsh Division of the British Steel Corporation's strip mills division. At that time the iron-making capacity of the Ebbw Vale and East Moors (Cardiff) works – the "heavy end" – was planned for closure, and Allen was deeply involved in the moves to find alternative employment in those areas.

He had also inherited the promise of investment in the Port Talbot works to the tune of £875m, when the scale of overcapacity in the world market was becoming clearer by the day. Meanwhile, the heavy end at Shotton was running out of time, and the plant's vocal and vivid proponents ensured that decisions were deferred, and resources diverted from Allen's aim of securing the future of the finishing end of the strip plants in Wales. The steering task called for high skills of persuasion and man management and Allen did not fail.

Then came the change of government in 1975, the closure of Shotton's heavy end and the activation of the slimlining plan under which employment in the two major plants in Wales was eventually to be reduced to below a quarter of what it had been in the 1960s. Neither Sir Charles Villiers, as the chairman of BSC who gave the lead, nor Peter Allen shirked the task, and it was Allen and his senior managers who had to ride out a strike and establish a manageable cost basis for the future.

Allen's personal kindness and fair and firm management eventually won the day. But for the industry to recover it was necessary to invest heavily in new technology; delay in doing so affected morale at the plants. Both decades were times of hands on political management of the steel industry; Whitehall and Westminster

were out short of people who knew how to run BSC better than its board and its managers, while bemoaning the wisdom of earlier politically driven investment decisions.

By now, Allen was managing director of BSC's strip mills division, and thus in command of three major works where at best only two could survive. It was his cool, methodical and relentless presentation to his board of the case for modernising the plants, for example by introducing continuous casting, which enabled BSC to persuade the Government that the investment was essential if BSC were to compete internationally and eventually transfer to the private sector as a self-standing and profitable business. This was a great service to Wales and the workforce whose interests Allen sought at all times to protect.

Allen's special qualities came fully into play in 1984 when striking miners attempted to close BSC's operations by blocking supplies of raw materials. Closure would have been perilous for steelmaking in South Wales. His openness with the men and his meticulous command of detail were crucial.

The full story of those months, including the import of coal, the heavily policed convoys of lorries of iron ore along the M4 in Wales (rail transport being denied), the lone protest in a vertiginous crane, has yet to be told. There is little doubt that in those months Allen's courage and determination helped save Wales's steel industry.

Allen was latterly a member of the British Rail board and chairman of the West Wales Training and Enterprise Council. On retirement, he stayed in Wales. He was a private man, but always with fun and a sharp eye for a winning horse. When asked to take on yet another exposed position as chairman of the West Glamorgan District



Allen: determination

Health Authority, he readily agreed. Later he transferred to the chair of the Morriston Hospital NHS Trust at Swansea. There he was caught between irreconcilable clinical demands and financial realities. Following a vote of no confidence from certain consultants, he resigned in silence and dignity.

Many in Wales will now reflect on the virtues of professionalism when combined with courage and integrity, in the form of Peter Allen, and the way in which he applied them to Wales's great benefit.

— Richard Lloyd Jones

Peter Springett

Peter John Springett, footballer: born London 8 May 1946; played for Queen's Park Rangers 1963-67, Sheffield Wednesday 1967-75, Barnsley 1975-80; died Sheffield 28 September 1997.

A transfer deal that was surely unique and a telling role in one of the most astonishing upsets seen at Wembley stadium ensure the goalkeeper Peter Springett's niche in English soccer folklore.

The ground-breaking transaction – believed to be the only one in which brothers moved in opposite directions – took place in May 1967 and involved Springett's leaving Queen's Park Rangers for Sheffield Wednesday in exchange for £24,000 and

his more famous sibling Ron, a fellow net-minder who had played 33 times for England. At the time, 21-year-old Peter was regarded as one of the most promising keepers in the land while Ron, 10 years his senior, was approaching career's end.

That spring the younger brother's stock was particularly high as he had just helped the Londoners to lift the Third Division title and, more sensationally, to come back from two goals down to defeat top-flight West Bromwich Albion in the first League Cup Final to be held at Wembley. With the score at 2-0 Springett made two crucial saves, enabling the underdogs, inspired by Rodney Marsh at his extravagant best, to net three times in the last 27 minutes and claim a romantic victory.

After joining the Loftus Road club as an apprentice in 1963, Springett made rapid progress, making his first-team debut that year and earning a regular place during 1965/66. The move to First Division Wednesday gave him a grander stage, but, though he developed into an admirably steady performer and won England under-23 honours, he never managed the quantum leap to full international status. However, as his contemporaries included such outstanding custodians as Gordon Banks, Peter Shilton and Ray Clemence, that can hardly be classed as a failure.

Sadly for Springett, the Owls were on the decline in the late 1960s and were relegated in 1970. Over the three following

seasons he lost his berth to Peter Grummitt but recovered it in 1973-74, only for Wednesday to plunge into the Third Division a year later. Thereafter he was freed to join Barnsley, whom he helped gain promotion from the Fourth in 1978-79, before retiring in 1980, having played in nearly 600 senior matches.

On leaving the game, Springett joined the police, and for a time acted as liaison officer between the South Yorkshire force and the fans of Sheffield United. For the last four years he battled an illness, which had confined him to a wheelchair, though only weeks before his death he had declared his determination to walk again.

— Ivan Porting



Springett in the QPR dressing room, 1972

BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS

BIRTHS
SEYER-HUNT: To Charlotte and Stuart, a daughter, 26 September. Welcome to all families.

DEATHS
VORHAUS: Hetty Davies. Died 27 September, aged 87. Deeply loved wife and mother. Greatly talented child piano prodigy. Film dialogue director, scriptwriter, campaigner for peace and justice. Funeral, 11am, Saturday 4 October, Golden Green Crematorium. Memorial Reception, 12.30pm, 23 Elworthy Road, Flossers, family only, contributions. Hetty Vorhaus Memorial Fund, 23 Elworthy Road, NW3 3BT.

Announcements for Gazette BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS should be sent in writing to the Gazette Editor, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL, telephone 0171-293 2011 (24-hour answering machine 0171-293 2012) or faxed to 0171-293 2010, and are charged at £6.50 a line (VAT extra).

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS
Princess Margaret, Honorary President, the British Museum Development Trust, opens the exhibition "Carver: 1900-1997" and attends a dinner at the British Museum, London WC1.

Changing of the Guard
The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment escorts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am.

Birthdays

Miss Julie Andrews, actress and singer, 62; Mr Morau Caplat, former Glyndebourne administrator, 81; Mr Jimmy Carter, former US President, 73; Mr Roy de Courcy Chapman, former Headmaster, Malvern College, 61; Cardinal Cahill Daly, Roman Catholic Archbishop of Armagh, 80; Mr Sandy Gall, television news presenter, 70; Mr John Gray, former ambassador to Belgium, 61; Mr John Gurnell MP, 64; Professor Sir Stuart Hampshire, philosopher, 82; Mr Richard Harris, actor, 64; Major David Jamieson VC, 77; Sir Edwin Jowitt, High Court judge, 68; Mr Graham Leach, radio news foreign correspondent, 49; Mr Thorold Maserfield, former High Commissioner in Nigeria, 58; Mr Walter Marbury, actor, 77; Mrs Theresa May MP, 41; Mr Peter Nobes, former chief constable of West Yorkshire, 62; Mr Edward O'Hara MP, 60; Dame Kathleen Ollerenshaw, educationist, 85; Professor John Reid, Regius Professor of Medicine and Therapeutics, Glasgow University, 54; Professor Sir Roland Smith, a former director, Bank of England, 69; The Right Rev David Sandilands, Bishop of Salisbury, 55; Professor Sir Colin Stansfield Smith, architect, 63; Sir Robert Telford, life president of Marconi, 82; Miss Jean Thomas, biochemist, 55; Mr Geoffrey Whitehead, actor, 58; Mr James Whitman, actor, 76.

Anniversaries

Births: Paul I, Tsar of Russia, 1754; Paul Dukas, composer, 1863; Stanley Holloway, actor and entertainer, 1890; Laurence Harvey (Lausha

Misch Skilne), actor, 1928; Denise Poiré, French actress, playwright, 1884; Franz Florin (Franz de Vriendt), painter, 1870; John Blow, organist and composer, 1708; Sir Edwin Henry Landseer, painter, 1873. On this day: Belgium became part of the French Republic, 1795; the *News of the World* was first published, 1895; Austria issued the first postcards, 1869; in the United States, the Watergate trial started, 1974. Today is the Feast Day of St Bevo or Allowin, St Melorus or Mylor, St Remigius or Remi, St Romanus the Melodist and St Theres of Lisieux.

Lectures

National Gallery: Colin Wiggins, "Blindness (I): Rembrandt, *Anna and the Blind Tobit*", 1pm. Victoria and Albert Museum: Simon Mathews, "La Eschiera del Barocco: modello y memoria", 2.30pm. Tate Gallery: Peter Brown, "Drawing and Watercolour Papers from the Oppé Collection", 1pm. Waddesdon Manor, Buckinghamshire: Dr Ulrich Leben, "Supply and Demand: the market for fine decorative art objects and furniture in 18th-century Paris", 11am.

Foundation for Science and Technology

Lord Butterworth, President, Foundation for Science and Technology, was in the chair at a lecture and dinner discussion held yesterday evening at the Royal Society, London SW1. Mr Andrew Warren, Sir John Houghton and Dr Mary Archer spoke on "Carbon Dioxide Emissions. Can the UK meet its targets?"

LAW REPORT: 1 OCTOBER 1997

Premature baby's death not murder but manslaughter

Where a woman went into premature labour as a result of a violent attack upon her, and the baby was born alive but subsequently died from the effects of prematurity, the mother's attacker could not be guilty of the baby's murder, but could be guilty of manslaughter.

Attorney General's Reference No 2 of 1994: House of Lords (Lord Goff of Chieveley, Lord Mustill, Lord Slynn of Hadley, Lord Hope of Craighead, Lord Clyde) 24 July 1997

The House of Lords reversed the decision of the Court of Appeal that the foetus was taken to be part of the mother until it had an independent existence, and that a conviction for murder would therefore be justified.

The appellant had stabbed his girlfriend, who was between 22 and 24 weeks pregnant with their child, in the face, back and abdomen. Sev-

enteen days after the stabbing, she went into premature labour. The baby died after 121 days from the effects of premature birth.

The appellant was charged with murder after the baby's death. At his trial the judge ruled that on the evidence neither murder nor manslaughter was proved, and directed the jury to acquit the appellant.

The Attorney General referred the matter to the Court of Appeal under section 36 of the Criminal Justice Act 1972 on the following point of law:

1.1 Subject to the proof by the prosecution of the requisite intent in either case, whether the crimes of murder or manslaughter can be committed where unlawful injury is deliberately inflicted: (i) in a child in utero where the child is subsequently born alive, enjoys an existence independent of the mother, thereafter dies and the injuries inflicted while in utero either caused or made a substantial contribution to the death.

1.2 Whether the fact that the death of the child is caused solely as a consequence of injury to the mother rather than as a consequence of direct injury to the foetus can negative any liability for murder or manslaughter in the circumstances set out in 1.1.

• Simon Hawkinsworth QC and Andrew Lees (Sugars & Co) for the appellant; Robert Smith QC and R. Calvert-Smith (Crown Prosecution Service) for the Crown.

Lord Mustill said that he perceived the established rules to be as follows: it was sufficient to raise a *prima facie* case of murder (subject to self-defence or provocation) for it to be proved that the defendant did the act which caused the death intending to kill the victim or cause grievous bodily harm.

If the defendant did an act intending to cause a particular kind of harm to B, and unintentionally did that kind of

harm to V, then the intent to harm B might be added to the harm actually done to V in deciding whether the defendant had committed a crime towards V.

Except under statute an embryo or foetus in utero could not be the victim of a crime of violence, and in particular, violence to the foetus which caused its death in utero was not murder.

The existence of an interval of time between the doing of an act by the defendant with the necessary wrongful intent and its impact on the victim in a manner which led to death did not in itself prevent the intent, the act and the death from together amounting to murder, so long as there was an unbroken causal connection between the act and the death.

Violence towards a foetus which resulted in harm suffered after the baby had been born alive could give rise to criminal

responsibility even if the harm would not have been criminal (apart from statute) if it had been suffered in utero.

Those rules were not based on principles sound enough to justify their extension to a case where the defendant acted without an intent to injure either the foetus or the child it would become. That would require a double "transfer" of intent: from the mother to the foetus and then from the foetus to the child as yet unborn.

With regard to manslaughter, all that was needed, once causation was established, was an act creating a risk to anyone. In a case such as the present, therefore, responsibility for manslaughter would automatically be established, once causation had been shown, simply by proving a violent attack even if the attacker had had no idea that the woman was pregnant.

— Kate O'Hanlon, Barrister

10/10/97

An adventure is beginning, and the bulldog isn't wanted



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Time and again we have exhorted Tony Blair to conjure a vision of his kind of Britain. Why? You could say (indeed, some of his advisers would once have said) that it's all rhetoric, mere clouds of words. But words count. They can change our self-image, and, by so doing, can change the way we behave, the way we are. It matters that we change the way Britain sees itself, because a false and retrograde way of understanding ourselves has been inflicted on this country over the past two decades.

Thatcherism brought many achievements, but one of its most destructive legacies is that we were encouraged to view ourselves in a flag-wrapped orgy of repressive nationalism – of war-time housewives making do in the bad times, and saving stamps in the good times. That vision was elaborated by John Major into a faintly anaemic picture of warm beer, Sunday lunches and cricket on the green. In more authoritarian tones, Churchillian

motifs and imperial bulldoggery were misappropriated to foster an out-of-date image of Britain, and we were all expected to subscribe to it. There was even (embarrassing to recall, really) a lot of guff about how we exported democracy – mother of parliaments, and all that. Any-one who believes that the rest of the world thinks they owe democracy to us should try finding an American who believes congressional and federal democracy originated here. As far as they are concerned we are a quaint mixture of aristocratic hauteur and Cotswold charm: democracy don't come into it.

So Mr Blair tried yesterday to articulate for the British people an alternative way of seeing themselves. It was his first sustained effort to do so, using his first party conference opportunity as Prime Minister to address voters directly and urge them to raise their sights, be ambitious about what Britain might be. But the aim

of that ambition was very different from Margaret Thatcher's. Hers was baughty, even disdainful: essentially, it believed that we were a naturally superior race. You can't go around selling Britain abroad by conveying the idea that the rest of the world is beneath you. Instead, you must do what Tony Blair suggested yesterday: perform so well that others inevitably, unavoidably, look to you for their lead. So his idea is to turn to our other tradition – that of the adventurer nation, the risk-taking Britishness, the one that believes in fairness and tolerance, that does not look down on people, but does challenge them. Above all, he wants us to think of ourselves as inventive.

Nations, in this sense, can be compared with individuals. A country, like a person, can, in the psycho-jargon, suffer from low self-esteem. And it can also find ways of feeling good about itself. The point is, they have to be real reasons. It's no good telling

ourselves that we are all kinds of fine and virtuous things when in fact we aren't. If, in Mr Blair's words, we want to be thought of abroad as "creative, compassionate, outward-looking ... tolerant, broad-minded", then we actually have to be those things.

The Prime Minister believes that on 1 May this year British people felt liberated to be those things again – that, in some strange way, they voted for him, and for New Labour, because that vote represented a desire on the British people's part to start their lives over again. But are we such decent upstanding folk?

It would be very easy to be cynical about this pitch, and very unwise. One reason for taking it seriously as a vein of political rhetoric is that Mr Blair clearly embodies those virtues himself, and the people of Britain credit him with that. But, more powerfully, people aspire to it; they actually want to be like their Prime Minister, just

as they are happy for him to present himself as one of them. It is hard to recall a time when the degree of identification between the democratic leader and his electorate has been so intense as it is now.

Mr Blair fully appreciates the staggering opportunity that that relationship offers him. He can invite the British people to think of themselves as being all the good things that he chooses to emphasise – dutiful, family-loving yet yearning for reform. And he can also present those virtues, in his own person, to the world beyond. No modern business with international pretensions would think itself worth a bean unless it could present a confident, positive idea of itself abroad – and one that is consistent with reality. The Prime Minister articulated his ambition for a radically rethought Britain yesterday. It's a brave one, and he evidently means what he says – to try his best; but now he has to make it real.

Post letters to Letters to the Editor and include a daytime telephone number. Fax 0171 293 2056; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk. E-mail correspondents are asked to give a postal address. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

LETTERS

Failing our children

Sir: Trevor Phillips is right to place blame on parents for truancy, youth crime, and so on (article, 27 September). But why do parents so often fail their children? And why do the children display the aggressive and bullying behaviour that he recorded?

The fact is that the preceding generation of parents also failed their children, though perhaps in different ways from today. For example, my mother-in-law professes surprise at the way in which we show affection to our children, cuddle them and tell them that they are lovely. In her day, this would have been condemned as spoiling them. Is it any wonder then, that so many of our generation suffer from a damaging lack of self-confidence?

Do parents who lack confidence in themselves therefore have trouble in parenting appropriately themselves? Do they make up for their perceived deficiencies by being autocratic, or overly liberal? It is widely accepted that a crucial element of good parenting is knowing how to set appropriate boundaries – letting children know what is acceptable and what is not, and being able to stick by that in the face of their opposition. It is interesting to view the relief on children's faces when they lose some of these arguments.

Let us move beyond the remedial action towards bad parents that Trevor Phillips suggests, to preventive action – putting effort not just into developing our children's intellectual intelligence but also their emotional intelligence.

LIZ REASON
Charlbury, Oxfordshire

Sir: In response to Diana Appleby's article "Give in, cop out – a mother's confession" (24 September) I suggest that not only are a growing number of children not receiving the firm guidance and socialisation they have a right to expect but that many adults are opting out of their responsibilities to guide and protect the young.

Some children learn early in their lives that the adults around them either do not care what they do, or are irritated by their behaviour but are very unlikely to take any action. They also learn the value of



nagging and tantrums if the parent gives in to these strategies. Schools are presented with some children who appear lacking the most basic social skills; efforts to control their behaviour are often not supported by their parents or may even arouse hostility.

We have to move away from the notion that putting limits on children's behaviour is "authoritarian" and will make children unhappy; far from it. Young people who have behavioural difficulties often say, when asked about their parents' view of the situation, "My mum and dad don't care."

Along with this mistaken laissez-faire attitude towards children's behaviour goes a more worrying lack of general concern for them. Quite young children will indulge in bad behaviour and vandalism in public places while the adults around them simply ignore what is going on. In fact most

children react quite reasonably if they are approached in a pleasant manner.

We have to learn to love our children more and to be less afraid of them.

SUZANNE TIBURTIUS
Broadstairs, Kent

Press and privacy

Sir: What better way to illustrate the dangers of a privacy code than the publication by *The Independent* of a private meeting by leading Tories at a restaurant. ("A better code, now make it work", 26 September?) Andrew Marr is uncertain as to whether Lord Wakeham, chairman of the Press Complaints Commission, would deem this in the public interest, since the new code considers restaurants private arenas.

Are editors going to let Lord Wakeham become their new editor-in-chief? It used to

be said that a free press included the right of journalists to print their views free from interference, the right of editors to offer diverse viewpoints, and the right of readers to decide what they wanted to read about.

TESSA MAYES
The Freedom and Privacy Project
London WC1

Sir: Once again we read of further massacres of civilians in Algeria (24 September) and your last paragraph says: "Public opinion in Europe is unmoved." Why? Unfortunately, I believe in one simple answer – there have been no photographs of these atrocities. I do not want to glory in the death of others, but only when people are horrified by what they see will they begin to demand action.

BRIDGET A TERRY
Carlton, Nottinghamshire

Sir: So, after a couple of weeks of exhorting the tabloid press for their invasions of privacy, and the week after new guidelines were being discussed on what sort of photographs the press should and should not cover, *The Independent* deems it OK to show on its front page (29 September) a photograph of the Prime Minister and his wife at prayer. If this is not a private moment, then what is?

PAUL MOORE
London SW20

Breast cancer taboo

Sir: The fact that breast cancer is most common in older women is not a reason for suppressing information about the disease ("Doubt cast over value of breast cancer campaigns", 30 September).

In many cases, it is the daughters and granddaughters of these women who, having

witnessed the suffering of someone they love, demand that breast cancer remains high on the public agenda so that resources continue to be made available to fight this devastating disease.

It is a fact that, in this country, breast cancer is the single most common cause of all deaths in women aged 35-54. Until very recently, there was a huge taboo surrounding the disease, with women too embarrassed to speak out about their illness. Surely we do not want to return to those dark days?

DELYTH MORGAN
Chief Executive
Breakthrough
London WC2

Plea for sanity

Sir: In his review of my book, *Saving Sane – how to make your mind work for you* (27 September) Michael Church's de-

scription of my approach as a "quack doctor" is a serious allegation.

For the record, besides my medical qualification, I hold seven other degrees and diplomas, plus several prizes and awards for my medical research work, and my current appointment is as an NHS consultant psychiatrist in a prestigious London teaching hospital.

In *Saving Sane* I have drawn on over 700 of the latest international research journal papers on topics ranging from the correct vitamin and mineral intake to the role of spirituality in mental health (chapters which Mr Church did not seem to get to).

Dr RAJ PERSAUD
Consultant Psychiatrist
The Maudsley
Croydon Mental Health
Service
West Croydon,
Surrey

Art without tears

Sir: The "Sensation" exhibition at the Royal Academy is a bleak evocation of some of the most cynical and distasteful preoccupations in our society. It is an exhibition of necrophilia, the ultimate 1997 collection of dead-end "art". These images do not provoke contemplation, they work by assaulting the mind in a series of "horror bites".

Along with all the other visitors I saw filing past the sculpture of a tree hung with dismembered bodies. I was not moved to tears. I reacted with revulsion, not pity or compassion. We do not know these victims and we are not encouraged to know them. We are coerced into viewing this scene of abject horror with a turn of mind akin to the snuff film fanatic. Here is a body with the genitals torn away. "Look!" says the sculpture. "Grotesque but fascinating," replies the mind.

The cynics among us will leave this exhibition exhilarated, they will have been moved and will no doubt applaud those who have had the capacity to move them. Yet to witness violence without experiencing sadness and compassion is to die a little more inside ourselves. But then isn't that what the cult of cynicism is all about?

CAROLYN MCCOURT
Seaford, East Sussex

Sir: Damien Hirst's creations would have been quite at home as exhibits – remarkable only for their size – in a sideshow in a 19th-century fairground.

Mrs MARJORIE STEPHEN
Abingdon, Oxfordshire

Family dinner

Sir: With reference to Robbie Jones' letter (29 September), I don't think we are like the Waltons, but my family eat together and watch television together.

Our six sons are now aged 17-26, but from tiny children they sat up to the table for family meals. Even now most evenings at least six or seven of us eat together and use the time to share chat about work, college, school, make plans, tell jokes, argue – all the usual family things.

All very valuable and achievable if the will is there!

DIANA ROWSELL
Pulborough, West Sussex

Pre-Millennium Tension? More ways to stop worrying and start living



MILES KINGSTON

We are continuing today our counselling session for those thousands of you who are suffering from PMT or Pre-Millennium Tension – in other words, those who are getting more and more anxious as the year 2000 approaches.

Who, typically, suffers the most from PMT?

Well, the ones who make the loudest noises of suffering are governments. They know they are expected to do something about the turn of the century. They have no idea what it is. Already the Tories have made a mess of millennium plans and now Labour is doing the same thing, with frenzied talk of domes. The idea of a 100ft high statue of Peter Mandelson in Greenwich is, to my way of thinking, the last straw.

Who has suggested that?

Nobody has. All I am saying is that the idea of a 100ft high statue of Peter Mandelson in Greenwich is, to my way of thinking, the last straw.

Ah. Right. Fair enough. What are other governments thinking of doing to commemorate the dawn of the next century?

Nothing very interesting. The Swiss government is authorising the issue of a new Swiss Army penknife with an indoor firework attachment. The Pope has issued an edict calling for the slaughter of all the first-born ...

Why has he done that?

Sorry, my mistake. He has issued an edict asking people NOT to slaughter the first-born. The Finns have asked all their citizens to stay sober for a change. The Americans have requested all their allies not to let Cuba enter the 21st century. The Germans plan to leave vast millennium towels overnight on premier beaches in Phuket, New Zealand, Scarborough, the Costa del Sol ...

As a matter of interest, what kind of celebrations did we have for it in 1900?

Well, don't forget that 1900 wasn't the

end of a millennium, only of a century. Right. So what kind of celebrations did we have at the end of a century?

Not much. We had already had huge celebrations in 1897 to mark the sixtieth year of Victoria's reign, and people were pretty bored with parades by 1900. They also thought that if things got very exciting again in 1900, Queen Victoria might have a heart attack and die, and then Prince Edward would take over.

Would that be bad?

Oh, yes. Prince Edward was a multiple adulterer.

Is that bad?

Oh, yes. It is worse than being a single adulterer. Imagine if Queen Alexandra had gone on TV like Diana and accused her husband of infidelity. She would have said: "It is very difficult staying married when there are over 50 people in a marriage ..."

Who is Queen Alexandra?

You seriously don't know?

Yes, I do, as a matter of fact. I am simply making the point that she doesn't matter any longer. Anyway, we seem to have strayed a long way from the millennium ...

Ah! That proves you're getting better! You're stopping thinking about it already! You've stopped worrying about how to plan for it!

Come to mention it, how do you think I should plan for it?

Well, if I were you, I would give up all plans of trying to be the first in the next century, as some people plan to do by booking hotel rooms just across the International Date Line.

I'm with you there. I would give up all ideas of trying to dodge from one century to another by hiring a plane and flying to and fro across the International Date Line.

Nice one! Anyway, that idea was dreamt up years ago by Alexander Fraser in *Punch*, when

he described Christmas on board a South Seas tramp ship which dodged back into Christmas Day from Boxing Day by going back across the International Date Line on Dec 26th ...

Is that true?

Of course. ANY other questions?

Yes. What are YOU going to be doing for the millennium?

Me? I'm going to be hiring a room in a hotel on the OTHER side of the International Date Line, as close to it as possible, and I'm going to try to be the last person in the world who is still living in the old century, while everyone else has gone charging forward into the next one.

Isn't that a bit pointless?

Yes, but the whole thing is bloody pointless! And the fact that you've noticed means you may well be on the way to recovering from PMT! Give me another cheque and come and see me again tomorrow ...

An impatient leader fast outgrowing his party



DONALD
MACINTYRE
BLAIR'S
SPEECH

So seamless has been Tony Blair's transition from Labour to national leader, that this was hardly a party speech at all. He came to the rostrum yesterday impatient and just a little irritated about what had gone before. This had less to do with the humbling of Peter Mandelson than with what he had detected as a creeping sense of relaxation among the faithful. You could tell on Monday morning, just by watching his face, that he hadn't much liked the elements of triumphalist reveling in the speeches of Robin Cook and John Prescott. Whatever he had thought of their approach, he didn't repeat the reworked commitment to "full employment" in Gordon Brown's speech.

Indeed, Blair made not a vestige of an attempt to wrap up his modernising message in old Labour language. Even the gracious tribute to Michael Foot was merely designed to point out how a decent and long suffering man had presided over a party which had been reduced to nothing more than a rabble on the brink of self-destruction. Indeed, he scarcely bothered to mention the Tories, other than to warn that they were not "dead but only sleeping", and that complacency remained the party's great enemy. It's as if the election were now a distant memory, celebration of which is a mere distraction from the urgent task of doing his country what he has already done to the party.

And, in communicating that vision, Blair succeeded handsomely. True, he did not linger on the details of the "tough choices" the party would face in order to realise its ideals. But it isn't hard to see the kind of thing he is pointing to. The decision to impose tuition fees for students is the first, or at least the biggest and boldest, lifting of a popular taboo in order to redirect funds to the most pressing priorities: education, health and the barriers between a prosperous majority and a workless, hopeless underclass. Whether on welfare reform, on the use of private money to strengthen the NHS's ability to provide universal care, or on new ways of organising schools, there will be a lot more taboo-breaking to come.

The vision Blair presented was a Labour one of a compassionate, socially inclusive Britain. The price he exacted was that traditional Labour institutions will no longer be assumed to be the vehicles for achieving it. He also invited, more starkly than ever, his party to take him as he is, confident that it has no other choice.

The Prime Minister knows that when he says bluntly there is no threat to civil liberty as potent as that of the fear of "women afraid to go out, and pensioners afraid to stay at home", the message resonates with all but the least honest of his own MPs. This is pop-

ulist, but not merely in the *Daily Mail*-wooling, Middle England sense; it's on the high working-class council estates in the Labour heartlands that the fear is most palpable. However, Labour's leader also knows that when he stresses that every policy will be monitored for its capacity to strengthen the family, there are many in his party, ministers included, who wince at what they fear is his social authoritarianism. Well, that's what he believes in; the pointlessness to him of baby-boomer Sixties libertarianism may perhaps be one reason why it sometimes seems as if it's the twenty and thirty-somethings, and the over-sixties to whom he has the deepest emotional appeal.

Rightly, Blair decided at the 11th hour to excise a peroration which dwelt on the public mourning for Princess Diana. But the national unity, and desire for modernisation, which he conjured for the future, was similar to that which he believes attended the Princess's death.

Here and there at Brighton, on the fringes and even on the floor, the old Labour Adam twitches briefly into life. It subscribes to a heresy - that because Labour won so resoundingly, perhaps the party didn't need to modernise so much. Absolutely dismissive of this canard, Blair warned that what the people have given, they can take away. Labour, as he pointed out, has never once won two full terms. It's a message that steels the party against relaxation. But it also reminds the faithful subliminally that he is already the most popular peacetime national leader of the century.

The conference vote to transform itself from next year into something much less capable of embarrassing the Labour leadership was massive and final. And it's true that the vote against Peter Mandelson was in large part personal. Mandelson will remain as closely as ever at Blair's right hand. Indeed the defeat was probably good for Mandelson and perhaps even better for the party since it punctures the myth of Mandelsonian omnipotence under which it had previously laboured. Nevertheless politics played a part too: the left did a little better than even it had expected. Last night the Blairite cadres were still working fiercely to ensure defeats today for the platform on rail privatisation and pensions.

But in a sense these issues scarcely matter. The biggest cheers in the speech were for two radical, liberal goals, dear to Labour's heart but in pursuit of which Labour not only has no monopoly but about which it has been traditionally hesitant: reform of an undemocratic House of Lords and the creation of a truly multi-ethnic Britain. Applause for these policies was, of course, utterly in tune with Blair's unrepentant affirmation that he wants to reunite with British Liberalism. Labour as we know it, he is saying, is a party that came in at the beginning of the century and may go out with it. The radical centre left he wants as much that of Beveridge, Keynes and Lloyd George as that of Bevin, Bevan and Aitken. Listening to all this, some of his audience in the hall no doubt winced. But his vision is now indelibly linked to his twin aims of modernisation and justice; a centre and left that will not break up as the 1996 coalition did.

And those in the party who don't like Tony Blair's long-term goal must now fear that he is outgrowing his party. Just as he appealed over the heads of the activists to the wider party membership to win the Labour leadership, so he now has the people as well as the party.

So why is it all right for men to grow old disgracefully?



SUZANNE
MOORE
WOMEN OF A
CERTAIN AGE

Edwina Currie is the vilest woman in Britain, Marianne Faithfull parading down the catwalk in Laine Keogh's golden dress is "a dreadful warning to all middle-aged women who delude themselves that looking funky is still an option". Vivienne Westwood is madder than the hats she wears, we were reminded again at the weekend in yet another interview that had her rambling on in her own inimitable style.

What, I ask myself, have any of these women done that men don't do every day? Is leaving your spouse, growing portly, talking nonsense, purely a male prerogative? I wonder? "However badly she behaves; however tasteless and unspeakably horrible her behaviour, there is always a tendency to let her off the hook," wrote Peter Osborne in the *Daily Express* in an article which was clearly not letting her off the hook.

It takes very little, it seems to me, before a woman is accused of behaving badly. Not brushing your hair is seen as a sign of inner moral decay. Old Mick can strut his boney stuff on the world's stage but the sight of Marianne Faithfull in gold gossamer is apparently too much to take.

The fact that Marianne is a total goddess seems to have escaped the body fuscists, those who patrol the boundaries of good taste from the perspective of dull old middle England. I expect they don't like Jilly Beane either - who models for Westwood and is in her fifties - because she has breasts and hips, those horrible female protrusions. They also, predictably, find Sophie Dahl too hot to handle and point out that sometimes she looks good but sometimes she looks bloody awful, which, of course, is the reason that she is an icon of liberation.

The reality is that flesh and blood women do behave badly and sometimes look dreadful, and we love them for it. Old Edwina is a game old bird, disarming in her honesty, trashy and flashy in equal quantities. No doubt she can be quite ap-



Westwood, Currie, the Two Fat Ladies and Faithfull
Photomontage: Jonathan Anstee

alling. She can also sometimes be right: she was right about the eggs and the age of consent and the fear and loathing of women that exists in her own party.

The end of a marriage is always sad but ... it happens. Why must the world assume that her husband Ray was long-suffering? He could have been an awful bore. We just don't know. All we do know is that, as with many other couples, once the children had left home there was no longer any reason for them to be together. Perhaps it was all timed to fit in with her latest book promotion, perhaps it wasn't. The most we can accuse her of, then, is being shameless.

It is fine for an Alan Clark or a David Mellor to promote media careers on the back of constant references by the press to their tireless libidos, it is fine for Jeffrey Archer to write formulaic rubbish, it is fine for men to be shameless shaggers and hustlers. But Edwina must be

publicly slapped down, punished for being a 50-year-old woman who still can't keep her trap shut about sex.

Years ago women would have had to wait for their husbands to die before doing what they liked, before getting what used to be called their "second wind". Nowadays, thankfully, there is divorce. Women of a certain age may be freed earlier to do as they please. While some of them will be lonely, some clearly find their independence exhilarating. Certainly it is always inspiring to find women who have grown old disgracefully. How else do you explain the huge success of *Two Fat Ladies*?

Here are two women who have broken every rule in the book and continue to do so. They are overweight, they drink, they are bawdy, their recipes consist almost entirely of saturated fats and alcohol, they are terrible snobs. They are roaring embodiments of what TV producers think will frighten the

horses, the polar opposites of every bland, blonde, clean-living weather girl/newsreader/lovely assistant that we see on our TV screens.

But we love them, these anti-Dellas, because not only can we see that they have lived but they remain so full of *jolie de vivre*. We like them basically because they just don't care and not caring is, for women, the most sought-after freedom of all.

I must admit that I was disturbed to see that Clarissa Dickson Wright appears to have washed her hair for this series and is even wearing make-up, but I was happy to see her reveal recently that her size never stopped her getting men.

"Like cooking", she said, "it is all about technique really". What matters though is the relationship between the two women when there is not a man in sight. They jolly along perfectly well without them, outdoing each other with tales of exotic dishes cooked in far-flung destinations and flirting, yes flirting, with each other.

It is a stroke of brilliance for the BBC to rerun *Absolutely Fabulous* after *Two Fat Ladies*. For here we have another two heroines for the dissolute woman in Patsy and Edina, two selfish, shallow alcoholics whom we once also looked up to. Just as we look up to those female politicians like Mo Mowlam and Clare Short who have never been "made-over", women who reveal themselves at times to be tired and emotional, who are not managing to juggle their lives in horrible Horlick style, but lobbing the balls at whoever is in their way.

What may be classified by some as mere bad behaviour in such women is, in fact, an authenticity far more endearing than the mask of acceptable femininity which so many women today are still forced to wear.

While we accept women drinking and swearing and sleeping around if they are good-looking young British artists or fictional creations like Bridget Jones, we find it much harder to take when women over 50 are expressing the same desires. A culture that de-sexes older women finds it difficult to know what to do with women who are theoretically past it but keep reminding us that they are not.

Yet what really underlies this latest little squirt of misogyny is not so much that women like Edwina and Marianne and Vivienne are still up for it but that they can all get by perfectly well with or without men. Sexual autonomy, I can't help feeling, is the real threat here. These women's strength is that, frankly my dears, they just don't give a damn. They have attained that Zen state - they are past caring.

The paradox is, of course, that the less such women care about what other people think about them, the more we find ourselves caring about them. Perhaps this is because, for many of us, it is only when we see women behaving "badly" that we see ourselves at all.

The boom will go bust: here's how to brace yourself



HAMISH
MCRAE
THE NEXT
RECESSION

Amid the triumphalism of Brighton, remember that this will be the Government that is in power during the next recession.

It is almost impossible to imagine at the top of a boom that there will be another recession, just as it is very difficult to imagine at the bottom of a slump that there will be another boom. Think back 10 years. We were less than three weeks away from Black Monday, the stock market crash. True, that had little immediate impact on the real economy, for the great housing boom of the summer of 1988 was still to come and there was to be another couple of years before the early 1990s recession hit home. But think of the mood that autumn - a newly-elected, confident government telling us that there had been a step change in the performance of the British economy, soaring consumer confidence, strong house prices, low unemployment - and it is not difficult to see a parallel with the present. Anyone with any sense of history (or even a half-decent memory) will feel a certain unease.

The trouble, of course, is that things are never exactly the same. There is such a thing as an economic cycle, but each cycle is different in its shape. The world economy is also hit

by shocks, and each shock is different too. So it is impossible confidently to predict that there will be a deep depression during the early years of the next century - any more than that there will be a stock market crash in the next couple of weeks. But one can say with a pretty high degree of certainty that there will be a sharp slowdown in the world economy at some stage in the next four years; and one can say, with reasonable certainty, that it will start within the next couple of years. The present good times will roll on for a bit, but they will not roll on for ever.

In what ways might the next cycle be different from the previous ones? For a start I don't think it will be preceded by a surge in inflation, or at least not the sort of surge that preceded the early 1970s, the early 1980s or the early 1990s recessions. It seems pretty clear that the long-term trend in inflation worldwide is down, and that the forces which have been driving it down for the last 15 years will remain in place.

Next, looking at the impact on the UK, the recession will have its most serious effects on different sectors of the economy. In the early 1980s the manufacturing sector was most severely hit, for the slump was associated with very strong

sterling, causing damage to exports. In the 1990s it was the property sector, for that was the most over-borrowed part of the economy when interest rates shot up. Now manufacturing is lean, productivity is high, and next time the pain may in any case be more evenly spread. Still, I would worry about parts of the economy which seem particularly buoyant at the moment: areas like entertainment and finance. I suspect, too, that the next recession may see a greater squeeze on the public sector, as tax revenues fall and governments are unwilling (maybe unable) to borrow so much to cover the gap.

But I suppose both the greatest uncertainty and the most important influence on the shape of the next recession will be the shock or shocks that trigger it. Recession tends to be accompanied by higher interest rates. In the 1970s and 1980s there were the two shocks which bumped up inflation which then had to be reined back by high rates; in the early 1990s (for Europe at least) the surge in rates was associated with the costs of German reunification.

While shocks, by definition, are unpredictable, you can see some candidates looming. For example, I'm not sure that we have yet seen the full impact of the loss of confidence that has

taken place in East Asia since the summer. That is probably not big enough to affect the whole developed world, but it will be pretty rough for Japan, the big economy most closely affected. Here in Europe there will be the "euro" shock - disruption associated with the new currency, if it happens - or, in a rather different way, if it doesn't. While, in the long-term, a single European economic might bring economic benefits, in the short-term there will be considerable costs.

Then, for the world as a whole, there will be the millennium bug, the need to re-program computers to cope with the year 2000. Rationally, that ought not to be a shock at all, because we know that the year 2000 will happen. It may pass without any dire effects on the world's computers, but it is at least possible that there will be business failures as a result of companies not being paid. Intellectually it is ludicrous that there should be a problem at all, but we simply don't know.

Shocks being shocks, though, the thing that unsettles the world at the end of the century will probably turn out to be something that has never even crossed our minds.

So what should we do? High-falutin' stuff about macro-economics from journalists is

about as useless as enthusiastic self-congratulation from politicians. What should ordinary people do to prepare themselves for harder times? I suppose the practical message is that people should seek to make their finances as possible while there is still time.

This would be a Puritan message. People should save now, setting aside cash in different forms so that if, say, the stock market does tumble, they will not suffer unduly. They should assume that, come retirement, they may have to rely largely on their own pension, rather than one paid for by the next generation of taxpayers. They should try not to borrow unnecessarily. They should be aware that no job is safe, that within a couple of years the unemployment rate will start rising again, and that accordingly they should build their skills and qualifications now to improve their chances of retaining a job later.

Not a lot of fun? Not quite the spirit of Brighton? Of course Tony Blair warned of hard times ahead but I don't think recession was quite what he had in mind. The really hard bit is remembering that the world at the top of the boom is a very different one from the one at the bottom of the slump.

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Shell axes 3,000 jobs and warns it may quit the forecourts

Shell yesterday revealed a sweeping reorganisation of its European petrol station network, cutting some 3,000 jobs, but promising reductions in petrol prices and further takeovers to build its share of the market. Chris Godsmark, Business Correspondent, reports, on the latest restructuring of the intensely competitive petrol retailing business.

The Anglo-Dutch oil giant gave itself two years to restructure its network of 13,000 European filling stations. But the company warned yesterday that it could be forced to leave some markets altogether, including Britain, if its chains failed to perform.

The programme means the loss of around 15 per cent of the 19,000 strong workforce in the refining and marketing businesses, of which about 2,500 are based in the UK. Many of the jobs would be those of managers as Shell "delayed" its organisation.

Shell insisted the British job cuts were difficult to quantify, because only 850 of its 1,700 UK sites were owned by the company. Most forecourt staff, even in company-owned stations, are employed directly by the manager.

The company admitted openly for the first time yesterday that its UK chain of petrol stations was unprofitable. Garages that failed to break even after two years would be closed and sold,

though the sites would not be offered to competitors.

"We are making losses... You should be constantly asking yourself whether we should be in a market," said Phil Turberville, head of European Oil Products.

The plan would slash Shell's retailing cost base in Britain by 43 per cent. Its UK operations are more expensive to run than those on the Continent, with 4.4p of each litre of petrol going on overheads, compared with 4.1p on the continent. The target is to reduce this to 2.5p a litre.

Though some stations would close, the programme aimed to increase Shell's share in all its European markets to 20 per cent, with the company taking the first or second place in each country.

The recent deal to buy 450 Gulf filling stations, which has yet to be formally signed, raised Shell's UK market share from just under 15 per cent to almost 17 per cent. But it remains in third place behind the market leader, Esso, with 18 per cent and BP-Mobil, which merged their petrol chains last year, with just over 17 per cent.

"We urgently need to get the organisation fit for the purpose. Every single piece of real estate has to perform," said Mr Turberville. The plan is doubly ambitious, because Shell's position is weakest in its highest markets, such as France and Italy.

To achieve this growth, Shell raised the prospect of another petrol price war as the company pledged to cut its fuel prices to a figure closer to those of its main competitors. Mr Turberville explained: "Price is one dimension. Where that involves cutting then of course they'll be cut."

Shell's UK market share declined after Esso launched its Price Watch campaign in 1995, which promised to match the supermarkets on price. Esso lost some £200m on the strategy, which also forced its competitors into the red. Shell yesterday predicted that the market would rationalise into just two or three oil giants battling with the supermarket chains, which account for 22 per cent of British petrol sales.

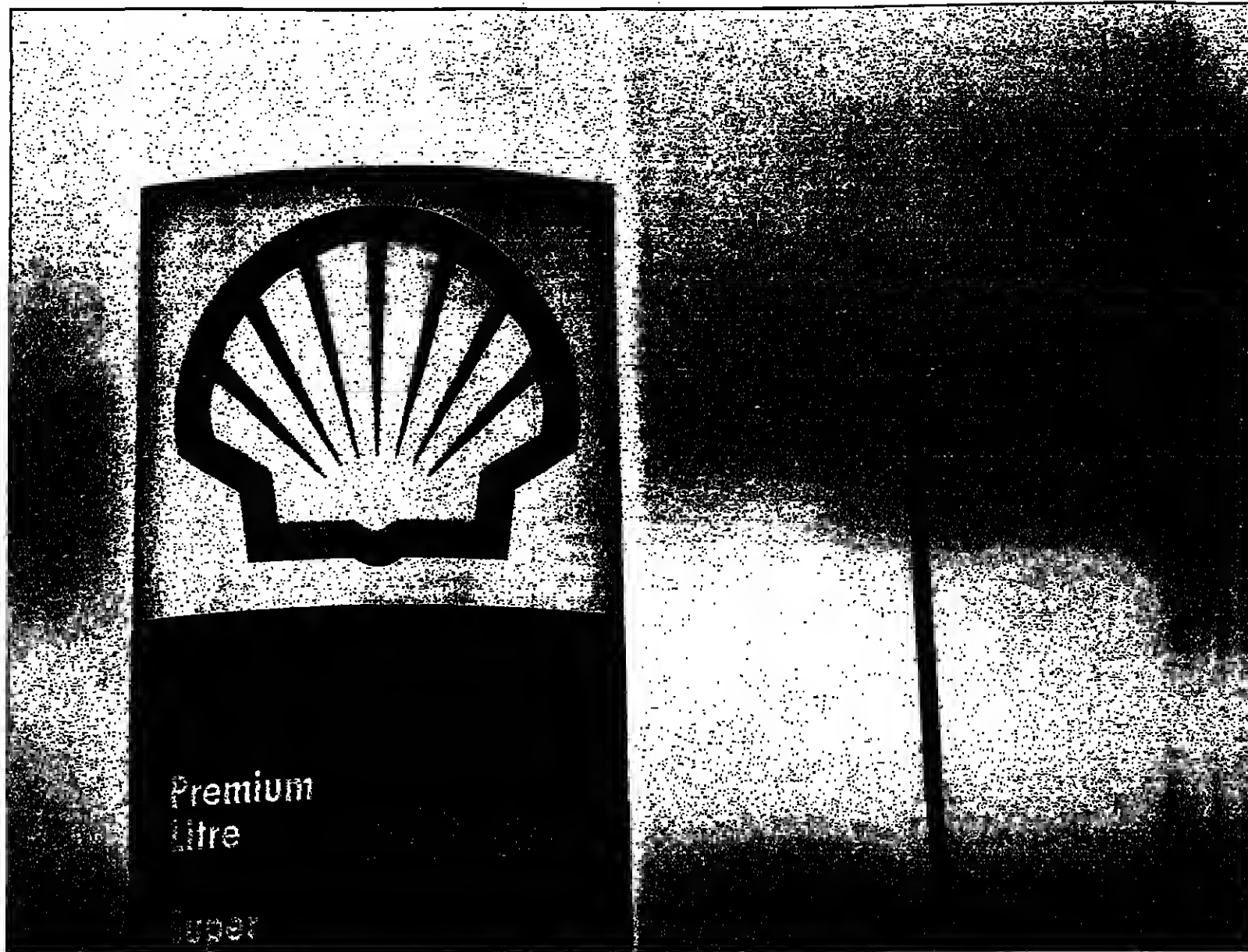
Further UK takeovers or mergers, to be unveiled "in months rather than years," were the other main plank of the strategy. "It could be through mergers, it could be swaps and it could be acquisitions. Nothing has been ruled out," said Mr Turberville.

Speculation mounted that another middle-ranking player would be bought up. Gulf, owned by Chevron of the US, succumbed to Shell after the collapse of three way merger talks with Elf of France and Murco, which trades in the UK under the Murphy brand.

Elf last night ruled itself out of a deal with Shell, insisting it had made a long term commitment to the UK. "We looked at the possibility of a sale or merger, but it just wasn't on the cards. Since then we've taken a conscious decision to build on our UK position," said a spokesman.

Oil analysts welcomed the announcement yesterday as a further step in Shell's global drive to boost its profitability. In the space of a month it has spent £1.2bn taking control of a chemicals joint venture and announced the £1.5bn acquisition of a Texas gas pipeline.

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Shell's familiar symbol may disappear from the landscape unless it can capture 20 per cent of the market within two years

How the personal touch replaces 'automated hell'

There could no better sign of the transformation quietly gripping Shell's bureaucracy than the sight of Phil Turberville, head of the European refining and marketing division, donning a set of overalls and filling a customer's petrol tank.

In recent months Mr Turberville, a 45-year-old Aberdeen-based accountant, has taken to the road in a battle bus touring filling stations from

Sweden to Spain. "Did you know that in Norway we serve 80 million hamburgers a year in our shops?" he asked. We cooed we did not.

His school of management is light years away from the old Shell doctrine. "Our business performance has not been acceptable. We've fallen into the trap of taking the customer for granted," he admitted, grasping a leaflet from the oar of the

companies he most admires, the rapidly growing Pret à Manger sandwich chain.

Mr Turberville fought against Shell's agonisingly slow decision-making machine. "You'd wait weeks to have something agreed by someone who hadn't seen a customer in months," he explained. Under the new structure, eight or nine layers of senior and middle management would be replaced with three.

The new approach has put staff back on the forecourts. Mr Turberville believes oil companies "automated the hell" out of garages in the 1980s.

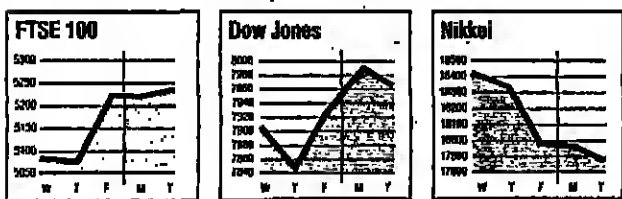
"Like lemmings we all followed that," he said. But the strategy is risky, depending on the improved service standards pulling in more customers. Sales at one west London filling station are up 15 per cent in trials of the

changes, but Shell admits some sites are far less profitable than others.

At least yesterday Mr Turberville had God on his side. As he walked on to the petrol station forecourt an elderly woman approached him, congratulating Shell on the way a team of employees was washing her Mini. "What did I say? It's working," he beamed.

Chris Godsmark

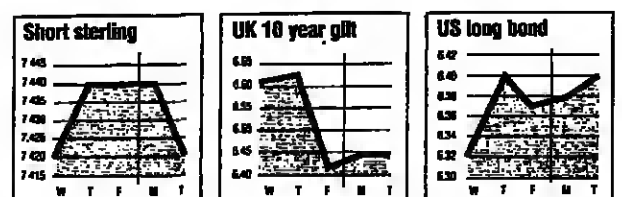
STOCK MARKETS



*Dow Jones Index and graph at 5pm

Indices	Close	Change	Change (%)	52 wk high	52 wk low	Yield (%)
FTSE 100	5244.20	23.90	0.46	5226.30	3900.40	3.35
FTSE 250	4029.90	13.80	0.34	4016.10	3438.10	3.38
FTSE 350	2516.30	10.70	0.43	2507.20	1949.20	3.35
FTSE All Share	2458.02	10.42	0.43	2446.86	1925.79	3.33
FTSE SmallCap	2335.0	10.30	0.44	2374.20	2128.40	3.18
FTSE Floating	1267.4	4.50	0.35	1346.50	1198.70	3.31
FTSE AIM	1003.8	-15.90	-1.53	1138.00	1002.10	0.97
Dow Jones	7998.76	-8.63	-0.08	8258.31	5882.17	1.87
Nikkei	17887.71	-89.50	-0.50	21612.90	17393.65	0.98
Hang Seng	15049.30	184.92	1.24	16574.27	11802.43	2.75
Dax	4167.85	63.58	1.55	4438.93	2651.85	1.91

INTEREST RATES

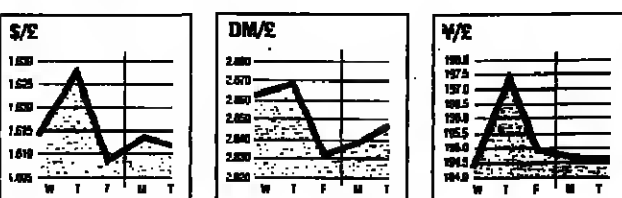


Money Market Rates	3 month	1 yr	1 yr	1 yr	1 yr	1 yr	1 yr
UK	7.31	1.36	7.57	1.32	8.45	-1.22	6.54
US	5.77	0.14	6.00	0.01	6.10	-0.60	6.30
Japan	0.56	0.05	0.63	-0.08	2.12	-0.79	2.77
Germany	3.40	0.29	3.76	0.48	5.52	-0.58	6.16

MAIN PRICE CHANGES

Rises	Falls	Price (p)	Day (p)	% Day
Biochemicals	227.50	43.50	7.45	1.70
Logica	863.50	43.50	5.18	0.60
CRG	263.50	12.50	4.61	1.75
Vide Catto	341.50	14.00	4.27	1.25

CURRENCIES



Pound	Dollar	Yen
Dollar	1.6146	-0.009
D-Mark	2.9449	+0.194
Yen	194.43	-0.04
E index	100.20	+0.50

OTHER INDICATORS

30 day	Change	30 day	Change	30 day	Change
Brent Oil (\$)	19.91	0.09	22.67	0.09	0.09
Gold (\$)	333.45	5.20	378.40	0.00	0.00
Silver (\$)	5.17	0.30	4.88	0.00	0.00

www.bloomberg.com

source: Bloomberg

Cordiant executives in line for £100m

Cordiant, the advertising group, yesterday unveiled a controversial incentive scheme which could see 140 executives sharing more than £100m between them.

The news came as the company split itself into two public quoted vehicles, Saatchi & Saatchi and Cordiant Communications Group (CCG). Cathy Newman reports.

Cordiant said 140 senior staff, 70 from each agency network, would buy £5m worth of shares between them to "demonstrate their commitment to the enterprise". If both networks meet targets based on earnings per share growth over a three year

period, executives could share a paper profit of over £100m. A spokesman for Cordiant defended the scheme, saying it was virtually impossible the targets would be met. "These are Herculean hurdles, and would mean doubling the size of the business," he said.

However, one analyst, who did not want to be named, hit out at the incentives, especially as Cordiant ran into financial difficulties in the early Nineties. "On the face of it, it looks exceptionally generous," he said.

To receive the maximum incentives, both CCG and Saatchi have to report a 25 per cent annual growth in earnings per share for three years. In addition, both agencies have to be number one or two in the top ten league of global advertising networks.

City analysts were disappointed by the £17.1m cost of the demerger, which was £2m over

budget. There were also worries that the margin target of 10 per cent had been deferred by a year. Shares, which have been slightly depressed since the demerger was announced earlier this year, added just 1.5p to end at 122p. However, Cordiant said yesterday that was simply a result of new trading agreements with Zenith Media, the media buyer which will be 50:50 owned by Saatchi and CCG after the demerger.

Observers were positive, though, that Bates Worldwide, which will now be part of CCG, would benefit from the demerger by being able to pitch for business which had previously conflicted with Saatchi. One analyst said: "Bates has up until now been conflicted out of ten per cent of the global advertising market through Saatchi having the Procter & Gamble account."

Michael Bungey, chief executive officer of CCG, said yesterday that Bates had already won new business from Cussons which it would not have been able to win if the old structure had remained intact.

But despite healthier prospects for Bates, which has recently lost key clients such as Miller Brewing, analysts said the demerger had put it in play. One said: "The big advertising networks such as WPP and Omnicom are getting to the stage where they need a third global network. Bates is sitting there - the number one in Asia Pacific, saying 'please buy me'."

Cordiant yesterday reported a 30 per cent increase in pre-tax profit to £20m for the six months to the end of June. Charlie Scott, chairman, who becomes non-executive chairman of both CCG and Saatchi, said the demerger would boost revenue growth.

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Friends Provident handed record £450,000 fine

Friends Provident, the leading insurer, was yesterday fined £450,000 for mis-selling pensions, the largest penalty imposed by the Personal Investment Authority so far. Andrew Verity reports that Sedgwick Noble Lowndes, the country's largest independent financial adviser, may be next in the firing line.

Some 10 companies have now been ordered to pay a total of £2m in compensation to victims of the pension mis-selling scandal after the record £450,000 fine handed out to Friends Provident yesterday.

Sedgwick Noble Lowndes is believed to be one of the four remaining companies being investigated by regulators for missing targets for compensating investors.

The company was "named and shamed" in June by Helen Liddell, the Economic Secretary to the Treasury. It had accused her of relying on inaccurate briefings from Treasury advisers in her efforts to speed up compensation payouts to investors. Sedgwick is likely to be fined hundreds of thousands of pounds because of slow progress in a review of mis-selling originally meant to be completed by January 1996. It could be liable to pay compensation

to up to 8,300 investors owed between £5,000 and £8,000 each.

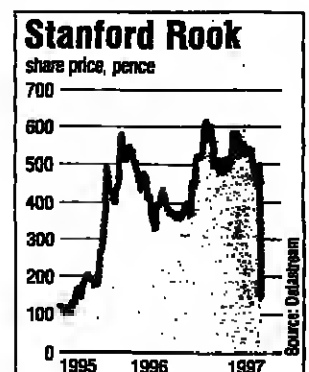
Fuspectors from the Personal Investment Authority (PIA) will this week visit Sedgwick's offices to monitor progress in the review. By September 18 this year, Sedgwick had assessed just 840 cases and offered redress to just 421 investors, despite a UK staff of more than 2000.

Sedgwick yesterday insisted it was merely a "routine visit". Communications director Byron West said: "We have no knowledge of a fine. We are proceeding with the timetable as agreed with the regulator."

Industry insiders believe Sedgwick's delay in carrying out the review was worsened by arguments with professional indemnity insurers which dragged on into mid-1996.

Friends Provident yesterday said it was "disappointed to say the least" to receive the record fine. Brian Sweetland, director and secretary of Friends Provident, claimed the life office was on target to meet an agreed deadline for completing 90 per cent of urgent cases by December this year.

He said that by assessing progress as of March this year, PIA was changing the terms of its threats to fine companies and moving the deadline. "We thought we were on target, we had agreed targets. Judge us by those - don't just pick a date."



years to complete. Second-phase trials for its use as a treatment for hayfever and asthma are in preparation in Oxford and Southampton.

However, none of these treatments will be ready to go on to the market until the next century, always supposing they get through clinical trials.

The principal outside shareholder is Bank Von Ernst, a private Swiss bank owned by the German retail bank Bayerische Vereinsbank, which owns a 24.9 per cent stake. Yesterday it saw the value of its holding plummet from £26m to £7m. A spokesman said the shares were held on behalf of private clients but could not comment further.

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OUTLOOK ON PETROL RETAILING. THE POWER OF INVEST- MENT BANKERS, AND CORDIANT'S INCENTIVE SCHEME

Shell discovers customer care, but will it work?

You can be sure of Shell, the admen chime. But for how long? The company dropped the broadest hint possible yesterday that unless it could make a go out of petrol retailing in the next two years, then Shell's familiar symbol and its catchy little slogan would be disappearing from the nation's forecourts for good.

The inability of the oil majors to make a living out of selling petrol despite the remarkable degree of price uniformity between them always was one of capitalism's minor mysteries. The rise of the supermarkets as a dominant force in petrol retailing has stripped away some of the mystique but in the process it has made the business even more unprofitable for the incumbent operators.

Shell's response, as fleshed out yesterday by the top brass on a visit to one of their sites on the North Circular, is to go for a mixture of cost-cutting, acquisitions and better customer service. The cost-cutting bit is not new - BP and Mobil have already taken the axe to their downstream oil marketing operations and Shell is doing likewise axing nearly 3,000 jobs across Europe.

Nor is the strategy of growth by acquisition very novel. Shell apparently regards a 20 per cent market share as the minimum necessary for critical mass. The depressing bit is that it doubts whether it can achieve that target other than through taking over stations from other operators such as Gulf.

The interesting part of the strategy is Shell's decision to go back to serving its cus-

tomers through quaint initiatives like putting extra staff onto the forecourts to fill up the tanks, wipe clean the windscreen and check the oil.

The return to personalised service is a fad running through many sectors at the moment, notably supermarkets. But it is not obvious why it should work in petrol retailing. The supermarkets, who own collectively sell more petrol in Britain than anyone else, make a powerful case for the argument that motorists buy on price and little else. For Tesco, Sainsbury and Asda it is a loss leader to get the customer into the supermarket aisles.

Shell, which has turned many of its forecourts into mini-shopping malls, believes it can reverse this trend with its customer care initiative. In the end, however, it is hard to see how it can beat the supermarkets.

The economics simply do not stack up. For every £1 a motorist spends on petrol, 76p goes in tax and fuel costs account for another 17p. That leaves 7p to cover overheads. Shell needs to halve that to make a profit but the customer care initiative is likely to increase costs. Throwing extra staff at customers looks an odd way of going about saving money and staying in the game.

EMU 'scoop' rattles the policymakers

Gordon Brown's press spokesman, Charlie Whelan, seems to have a particular liking for the expression "load of old bollocks"

so had he not been in Brighton with more important matters on his mind, he would have been in his element yesterday fielding questions about a story that appeared in one of our rivals, *The Times*. On this occasion he would have been right. The story concerned the FT's apparent scoop last Friday about a shift in government policy on EMU.

According to *The Times* there had been heavy buying, by Goldman Sachs in particular, of gilts futures ahead of this story appearing and millions had been made by doing so. The story then went on to draw the inference that since the wife of Goldman's chief economist, Gavyn Davies, works in Gordon Brown's office, that Goldman might have known about the shift in policy too, or at least that the FT had been briefed about it. Dear, oh dear. Let's hope *The Times* has good libel lawyers for the inference is nonsense, as is the suggestion that the position taken by Goldman's in the futures market was anything out of the ordinary. The joke is that had Goldman's really known about the story and its likely effect on markets, the positions taken out would have been a great deal larger.

All the same, this malicious little piece of City gossip does raise some wider issues about the power of investment bankers over policymakers and markets. The best investment banks go to great lengths to ensure both that they are close to policy makers and have the very best of information on anything that might affect markets, and that they have opinion formers of sufficient calibre to influence what pol-

icy makers do. It becomes hard to know, at times, just who is influencing whom. Is it investment bankers interpreting the information they derive from policymakers, or is it their own opinion formers and the weight of their money in the markets that instruct the policymakers?

Some foreign central bankers and governments actually go so far as to consult big market players as to what reaction might be to this or that change of tack. Though it seems a bit far fetched to believe this is what happens in Britain too, ministers are certainly very conscious of how their actions might play with the markets and the opinion formers that influence them.

By the same token, what might look to be something akin to insider trading by particular market players is often just inspired speculation. Goldman Sachs has been urging a more pro-EMU stance on the Government for months and has long taken the view that gilt yields should be converging with bond yields in Germany and France. Can anyone blame a proprietary trader for backing his view with a position in the market? Politicians may not like the power and influence of these people very much but, for the time being, it is the way of the world.

Top dollar rewards at Cordiant

From the soon to be demerged Cordiant advertising group comes another of those executive equity participation plans that will

enrich senior employees beyond the dreams of avarice provided certain performance targets are met. These admittedly look quite challenging given that to hit the jackpot, the company has to achieve compound growth in earnings over three years of 25 per cent. Few stock market analysts give either of the demerged halves, Saatchi & Saatchi and Ted Bates in the US, much chance of hitting them, but then they said the same thing about Martin Sorrell at WPP and he's now laughing all the way to the bank.

Actually, the task may not be that hard at Saatchi & Saatchi either. Executives don't have to add any new business at all to gain top dollar; all they have to do is improve their profit margin, which at present is about half that of the top performers in the industry. In other words, just running the business for cash might deliver the required result. For lower levels of performance the consolation prizes ain't half bad while abject failure results in only limited damage to the pocket.

The problem with all these schemes, which seem to be spawning the length and breadth of corporate Britain, is not so much that the rewards of success seem so excessive but that the penalty for failure are so limited. However, they perform, all these people will continue to draw base salaries in line with the best in the industry. They are neither risking their own capital, nor is the wealth they are creating the result of their own entrepreneurial endeavour. But then you just can't get the staff these days, can you dear?

Manchester United sets up its own TV channel

Manchester United became the first football club to set up its own pay-TV channel, as it confirmed its long-awaited deal with BSkyB and Granada. *Cathy Newman reports.*

The three parties, which will have an equal share of equity in the venture, will contribute around £7m between them, but BSkyB and Granada are expected to bear the brunt of the investment.

The deal will come as a blow to the BBC and the cable and satellite programmer Flextech, which had previously been ahead in the race to sign up the club. City analysts said yesterday that BSkyB had been canny in getting involved with MUTV, as it would enable the satellite broadcaster to maintain its

monopoly on sports content. BSkyB already has an exclusive contract to show all Premier League games, which has another four years to run.

MUTV is to launch in a year's time, and will carry six hours of programming each day. It will initially be available on digital satellite and cable, but Steve Morrison, chief executive of Granada Media Group, said it could eventually broadcast on digital terrestrial television. Granada jointly owns British Digital Broadcasting, which won all three digital terrestrial licences earlier this year.

However, some observers expressed doubt that the channel would be a success without any live games. Justin le Patourel, media analyst at ABN Amro Hoare Govett, said: "There is no live content on these channels, and old football games just aren't interesting."

Mr le Patourel said MUTV was likely to be the first of many



On the up: (from left) David Chance of BSkyB, Martin Edwards, Manchester United chief executive, and Steve Morrison from Granada

similar channels, with Leeds United and Newcastle United having expressed an interest in setting up television ventures.

David Chance, deputy managing director of BSkyB, said the channel would move into profit if under 10 per cent of the estimated two to four million

United fans subscribed. Martin Edwards, United's chief executive, said he expected the channel to break even within three years of its launch next autumn.

Meanwhile, Mr Morrison said: "There's an unsatisfied appetite for Manchester United and all its internal and external

affairs. We want to extend the club's brand beyond its fan base."

United yesterday announced a 79 per cent surge in profit before tax to £27.6m for the year to the end of July. The previous year's figures had been slightly inflated by a £2.2m ex-

ceptional contribution.

An increase in gate receipts helped offset rising player costs, with 1.47 million people attending the 27 matches at Old Trafford. Player costs increased by £5.4m during the year.

Man Utd prepare to take on Juventus - *Sport, page 31*

Banks agree to Anglo restructuring

One of the last calamitous leveraged buyouts of the 1980s was finally laid to rest yesterday after a consortium of banks agreed to a restructuring of Anglo United, the group crippled by its purchase of Coalite. *Tom Stevenson, Financial Editor, reports*

Anglo United's full year figures yesterday were unremarkable enough - a loss of £1.3m compared with last year's deficit of

£38.3m - but they marked the end of a classic 1980s disaster story and the start of an intriguing South Atlantic investment opportunity.

Back in 1989 tiny Anglo thought it had hit the big time when it borrowed £500m to take over the much larger Coalite conglomerate. Its head then, David McErlain, planned to sell off a raft of peripheral businesses, including land in the Falkland Islands, the Charningtons solid fuel business and a chain of motor dealerships, pay off his debts and make a handsome turn.

It was not to be. Recession intervened and disposals became impossible at a sensible

price. Anglo's problem became the banks' problem, principally HSBC's, and Mr McErlain was sent on his way, leaving a shell with little to recommend it but a pile of tax losses.

Last year a deal with a potential buyer of the remaining Coalite business failed.

Yesterday Anglo admitted that sales of its Coalite fuel were running 15 per cent below last year's level and its chemicals arm was suffering from the strength of the pound.

As a result, the banks were forced to agree an unusual restructuring of Anglo that will see shareholders swap their all-but-worthless holding in the company, which has consider-

able negative net worth and won't be able to pay a dividend or service its debts, for shares in the only remaining business with any potential, the Falkland Islands Company.

Small beer it may be currently, but the Falkland Islands Company really is the economic powerhouse of Britain's South Atlantic colony. It owns most of the shops and a hotel, the islands' fishing agency and, importantly, the rights to service any offshore oil and gas exploration activity.

That is not worth too much just now, but with millions of barrels of oil in the region, the potential for that monopoly is substantial.

Coal claimants' victory may cost employers £100m

An industrial disease could fund employers with a massive bill for compensation. *Barrie Clement, Labour Editor, examines the implications of a High Court judgment yesterday.*

British industry could face compensation claims worth £100 million or more in the wake of a ground breaking award yesterday to seven former miners.

In a key High Court test case, the ex-pitmen, who are suffering from the debilitating effects of Vibration White Finger, were awarded almost £125,000. The condition is caused by the constant use of heavy machinery and has considerable implications beyond the coal industry.

While the government, as the former owner of British Coal, could now face a bill of £50 million, it is known that the ailment is also suffered by employees in the printing, textile and construction industries. In its worst form, the disease can

mean sufferers lose the use of their hands. In less severe instances, it causes the loss of grip, strength and sensitivity.

Tom Jones, of Thompson the solicitors which handled the case on behalf of the seven former miners, believes it could eventually amount as the biggest claim against one employer. The government will now face 500 compensation claims from ex-pitmen.

In an earlier ruling, Judge Jim Stephenson found that from 1 January 1973, British Coal should have known of the risks associated with tools used in the coal mining industry.

He also ruled that from 1 January 1975, there should have been some form of prevention system in place - including warnings and routine examinations. It was pointed out that Vibration White Finger has been known since 1911 and literature was available on the condition from 1954.

Yesterday, the seven men were granted £124,735 with the biggest individual award totalling £41,085 to David Carver of Co. Durham. Two of the nine men who brought the test case were denied damages.

IN BRIEF

Reed Elsevier starts Travel Group investigation

Reed Elsevier yesterday named the members of a team of auditors, lawyers and accountants who will investigate the problem of overstated circulation figures at its Travel Group. Reed said the team will be led by law firm Freshfields, assisted by Davis Polk & Wardwell in the U.S. The company revealed last week that circulations in its hotel and airlines directories had been overstated since 1991, and that advertisers would need to be recompensed. Some analysts said the charge could amount to as much as £200m.

Option gain for Tesco man

Tesco's finance director and deputy chairman David Reid yesterday made a profit of £557,000 by exercising and cashing 281,000 share options awarded him in 1994. He declined to give a reason for the sale but a Tesco spokesman pointed out that it was only the second time he had exercised options and he had reinvested part of the proceeds buying 30,000 more shares at a cost of around £140,000. He also retains 300,000 options which could have been exercised.

French jobless total up

France's headline unemployment level rose by nearly 20,000 in August to 3.1m, or 12.5 per cent of the labour force. There was a particularly big increase, of 1.8 per cent, in those out of work for more than 12 months, suggesting that unemployment has at best stabilised despite the gathering pace of economic recovery. Economists predict that unemployment will fall as the economy expands, although they are sceptical that government plans to introduce a compulsory 35 hour working week will improve job prospects.

EDS wins forces deal

EDS, the rapidly-expanding specialist in information technology outsourcing, was yesterday named as the preferred supplier of pay, pensions and administration services for the UK armed forces. The deal, believed to be the largest IT PFI contract since labour came to power, will involve the installation of huge computer systems to deal with the 300,000-plus personnel working around the world.

CBI wants pensions rethink

The Confederation of British Industry is set to press for the return of an old policy on pensions which was ditched by the Labour Party in the run-up to the general election in May. Delegates at the CBI's annual pensions conference were told members overwhelmingly favoured a means-tested top-up to the basic state pension or "minimum pension guarantee".

Deputy director general Peter Agar said: "Raising the basic state pension is an expensive way to help pensioners. Rather than an inadequate basic pension provided for all, a minimum pension guarantee would provide a decent level below which no pensioners would be allowed to fall." But the idea will meet opposition from Frank Field, the minister for welfare reform at the DSS, who is ardently opposed to means-testing.

Chelsea losses reduced

Chelsea Village, the owners of Chelsea Football Club, made a reduced loss of £376,000 in the first half of 1997 compared with a loss of £2.95m at the same stage last year. Chairman Ken Bates reported a net operating profit of £2.17m on turnover of £27.3m compared with £212,000 on £10.43m at the same stage, but net losses of £2m on transfer fees and amortisation of players ensured another loss before tax. The Bosman ruling on player contracts will improve cash flow by reducing transfer fees although it will raise player salaries. A new apartment block is now sold and Chelsea Communications is now generating income.

Millwall turnover down

Second division Millwall, back from receivership in June, lost £270,000 in the six months to the end of May, compared with £50,000 at the same stage last year. Turnover dropped 20 per cent to £1.6m. Staff wages were slashed from £2.1m to £1.3m but revenue from transfer fees fell from £2.1m to £1.7m and interest charges ensured a loss. The club still hopes to overcome police objection to hosting Brighton's games.

Barclays unions vote for strike on performance-linked pay

Staff at Barclays voted narrowly in favour of strike action yesterday following the failure of a limited work to rule to bring management to the negotiating table. Around 40,000 of Barclays 50,000 staff could take action after a combined UNIFI and BIFU motion was approved.

The unions have taken the ballot result to Barclays management in a bid to get them to change a planned performance-related pay scheme that they warn could leave 25,000

staff with no pay increase next year. Seven days notice must be given of any strike action and it must be taken within 21 days of the ballot.

According to BIFU, Barclays, which made profits of £1.4bn in the first six months of the year, is "neglecting its social and moral responsibilities towards its staff." The three-week ban on overtime was in protest at the pay proposals, which the unions claimed had cut opening hours and affected computer

work. At issue is a new pay and grading structure introduced on 1 July which replaced the previous system of across the board pay increases with a new regime of performance and market-related pay rises.

Barclays has disputed the unions' claim that the new system amounts to a pay freeze. According to the bank, all staff will get a pay rise next year and the proposed changes could actually end up costing more.

Barclays has refused to re-

turn to negotiations, saying it underwent five months of negotiations before announcing its new deal.

Yesterday's ballot saw around 35 per cent of both UNIFI and BIFU unions turn out to vote, with 51 per cent of UNIFI voting in favour of strike action and 55 per cent of BIFU.

The vote followed a previous ballot, in which UNIFI voted against strike action but for limited industrial action.

Tom Stevenson



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Solutions for a small planet

Boosey & Hawkes fails to lift gloom

Shares in Boosey & Hawkes plunged a further 37.5p yesterday, despite a strong set of first-half figures. *Leo Paterson reports the company's share price has been dogged by growing City concerns over its long-term future.*

Boosey & Hawkes yesterday said that rising costs associated with takeover talks at its main shareholder Carl Fischer had cost the group £570,000 in the last six months.

Boosey & Hawkes' share price under Richard Holland, chief executive, has fluctuated wildly amid growing speculation about its future.

US based Carl Fischer, which owns a 43 per cent share in Boosey & Hawkes, decided to put up its stake for sale earlier this year. Under UK takeover rules, whoever buys Fischer's stake must put in an offer for the whole of Boosey's. But it was revealed last week that the offers Fischer had

been receiving for Boosey were "materially below" the current share price.

All the big names in the music industry are thought to have been eyeing up Boosey including Polygram, EMI and Sony. They are likely to be interested in Boosey's music publishing business, but analysts are expressing doubts about the future of its instrument manufacturing business. Though Boosey may be able to exploit synergies from their publishing and instrument manufacturing divisions, it is not at all clear whether a cut and out music publisher such as EMI would be able to do so.

Boosey announced first-half operating profits of £3.4m yesterday, up from £2.8m in the same period last year. Sales were also up by 4 per cent, despite being held back by a £3.8m currency hit. Yet profits before tax fell by 14 per cent, after costs relating to sterling's strength and the possible sale of Carl Fischer's 43 per cent stake in the company. Without these costs, pre-tax profits would have risen by 13 per cent. Shares closed at

787.5p, 37.5p down on yesterday, and 26 per cent lower than August's peak.

Boosey's underlying figures are strong. Instrument manufacture and publishing, Boosey's two main divisions, both improved on last year, despite the effect of the rising pound.

The instrument division saw a mammoth 75 per cent jump in operating profits this half, up to £2.66m. Almost half of this increase came from reed makers Rico, considerably exceeding management expectations. Boosey and Hawkes acquired US based Rico International in September 1996 for £18m.

Overseas, instrument sales were up in Germany, but down in Japan. The downturn in Japanese sales was attributed to "the continuing weakness" of the Japanese economy.

Before consideration of special costs, operating profits in publishing were marginally up on the same period last year. However, a combination of German restructuring costs and the strong pound helped to knock operating profits after special costs down to £1.51m.



Richard Holland, chief executive of Boosey & Hawkes (above), has witnessed a fluctuating share price amid speculation about its future

Northern Rock members set for £2,150 windfalls

More than 800,000 members of Northern Rock are set to receive a windfall of at least £2,150 each when it becomes the latest building society to float on the stock market today. But Andrew Verity reports that members who sit on their shares could receive an even bigger payout.

Northern Rock is likely to be valued at around £1.9bn when it floats tomorrow. Analysts believe it could soon be knocking on the door of the FTSE 100 index, fuelling demand for its shares and triggering boosting windfalls for members.

The free shares than Northern Rock members will be given tomorrow are likely to be worth 20

per cent more money than analysts first expected.

Northern Rock shares are expected to fetch 430p each when it goes to market today, compared to early estimates of 360p a share. Members will receive 500 shares each, likely to be worth around £2,150. Some savers who also have mortgages are entitled to 1,000 shares.

Analysts yesterday insisted the shares were well valued and may even rise to the 500p mark fuelled by persistent takeover rumours.

A 500p share price for Northern Rock would value the new bank at approximately £2.2bn – probably enough for a listing in the FTSE 100 index.

Even the prospect of reaching FTSE 100 levels is likely to fuel demand for shares among fund managers who track the index and have to "make up their weight" in companies that join it, further boosting share prices.

Nikko Europe analyst Tim Clarke said: "It doesn't look overvalued at all compared with the rest of the sector – building societies, banks and some insurance companies."

In current market conditions, with the banking sector hopping ahead, it could move towards the £5 level over the next three months. If people thought it would go into the FTSE they will start buying it."

Unlike other floating building societies, Northern Rock has seen 95 per cent of its members take up the offer of 500 free shares each.

More than 43 per cent of its members, mostly in the north-east of England, elected to sell their shares straight away in an auction held yesterday – compared to just 23 per cent at both the Halifax and Woolwich.

But if prices hit the 500p mark, these 350,000 members will have missed out on £350 each.

Nerves strike Wall Street as fears of an eventual rate increase grow

Few traders on Wall Street expected the Federal Reserve Board to increase US interest rates yesterday, but they are starting to bet that it will do so later this year. *Diane Coyle, Economics Editor, reports on nerves in the financial markets.*

As the Fed's Open Markets Committee met in Washington yesterday, analysts on Wall Street were confident that it would not spring a surprise by increasing US interest rates for the first time since March.

Yet Treasury bond and share

prices took a tumble yesterday because of the growing fear that it is only a matter of time before the Fed feels compelled to increase the cost of borrowing. Figures on employment and earnings last month, due on Friday, are expected to show that America's jobs market is growing ever tighter.

By late morning yesterday the price of the benchmark Treasury bond had fallen half a point, while the Dow Jones index was 53 points lower at 7,937.89.

Stephen Lewis, chief economist at London Bond Broking, said: "The Fed has to be able to justify a rate increase before it goes ahead, but its recent statements suggest it is watching out more alertly for signs of inflation."

Surveys suggest that the source of inflationary pressure is likely to

be shortages of labour, even though there is little hard evidence of wages growing faster. Wage inflation has drifted upwards during the past 18 months, but it remained at only 3.6 per cent by July.

However, economists reckon companies are rewarding employees in ways that do not show up in the conventional earnings figures – through generous stock option schemes, for example.

Certainly, there is little prospect of a let-up in the pace of consumer spending, which has been powering the US economy in growth rates well above the sustainable trend.

A survey of consumer confidence from the Confidence Board yesterday reported a further increase in optimism in August, leaving it close to its all-time high.

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY TOM STEVENSON

Hepworth seeks to stop the rot

Shareholders in Hepworth, the boilers, pipes and building materials group, were bracing themselves for poor half-time figures yesterday. But the slump in profits from £35.5m to £11.1m was much worse than expected and the shares shed another 3.5p to 208p.

New chairman Jeremy Lancaster and Jean-Francois Chene, who returns today as chief executive, are determined to stop the rot and have launched a full strategic review.

The dividend has been slashed, the interim payment is down from 5.5p to 3p and the final will be cut from 9p to 5p. Restructuring could start before the year-end but the full outline of the plans will take six months.

There is certainly much to be done. A closure of the factory in Brussels accounted for £5.9m of the profits fall and the group made a disappointing £13m loss on disposals.

The underlying trading performance was also poor. Turnover in the continuing businesses was down 4 per cent to £305m, and profits were down by a third to £21.6m.

Translating profits from UK exports and overseas activities, which together account for 50 per cent of sales, cost the group £5.2m. Redundancy costs and pension charges together cost £1m more than last year.

Currency costs could aggregate to £10m by the year end and pension

look too exciting but a better measure – core income, which excludes lumpy capital gains and provisions – grew a much more impressive 32 per cent.

That sort of growth looks set fair to continue following yesterday's deal with Bank of Scotland and Northwestern Mutual Life, which will increase ICG's ability to underwrite larger amounts of mezzanine finance than its own balance sheet and existing backers like Hermes and Guardian can handle.

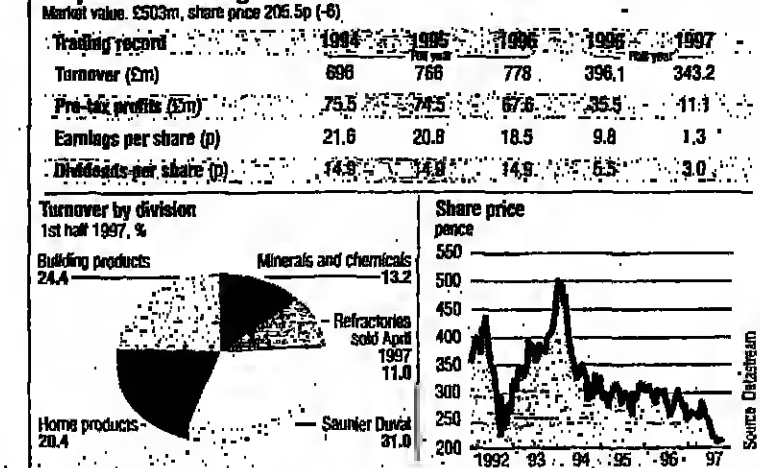
The biggest danger facing ICG is that the banks and venture capitalists decide that, with more cash than they know what to do with, they can fund bigger slices of deals themselves and reduce or even remove the need for the mezzanine financiers. As the business cycle heats up, banks tend to lend greater and greater slices of the total value of a deal.

According to ICG, there is still plenty of business around and the quality of its staff, compared to the relative jobsworths at the banks, means lenders find it quite comforting to have the company give a deal its seal of approval.

With no real quoted rivals, valuing ICG is difficult but because it pays out most of its core income as dividend it has tended to be valued as a yield stock, albeit with substantial growth potential.

The interim dividend of 5.4p represented 12.5 per cent growth over last year's first half 4.8p, putting ICG on track for the consensus forecast dividend of 17p or 18p for the full year. With the shares adding 14p to 367.5p, that implies a prospective gross yield of 6.0 per cent. Good value.

Hepworth: At a glance



New beginning for Trocadero

Losses for the six months to June of £465,000 were disappointing but yesterday marked a new beginning for Trocadero. It finished offloading its physical assets to former parent Burford to leave the newly arrived management team of John Conlan and Nick Tamblin (both ex-First Leisure) with a mix of intellectual property and leisure interests.

Trocadero now owns the Enid Blyton rights and has a 50 per cent stake in problem-ridden Segaworld. Other interests include a 3D cinema and an indoor freefall ride due to open soon at the Trocadero. The future looks bright enough for the Enid Blyton side, currently trading well ahead of last year. The company has recently signed some important TV deals.

The real question mark hangs over the leisure side of the company. The well publicised difficulties at Segaworld trundle on and the freefall ride and the 3D cinema were both initiatives of the recently departed Nigel Wray and Nick Leslau. Prospects now hinge on how Mr Conlan and Mr Tamblin decide to spend the £73m freed up by the property deal and on how quickly the forecast break even this year is turned into profit.

Trocadero's shares are currently hovering at around 19p, just above their all time low after a horrific year. The new management team's remuneration package gives them a strong incentive to turn the business round. A tentative buy, depending on the faith you place in the Conlan and Tamblin double act.

Half year figures to July came in better than expected, especially the size of the loan book, which increased from £250m to £310m. Pre-tax profits edged up 4 per cent to £11.5m. That doesn't

Intermediate Capital Group provides so-called mezzanine finance for management buyouts – the bit of funding that comes between relatively cheap bank debt and expensive venture capital equity funding.

If things go wrong, ICG ranks before shareholders and trade creditors but after the banks for repayment. It is rewarded for that level of risk with a higher coupon on the debt and often an equity kicker as well in the event of a flotation or takeover. This is a growing niche and ICG is the leading independent offering it.

Half year figures to July came in better than expected, especially the size of the loan book, which increased from £250m to £310m. Pre-tax profits edged up 4 per cent to £11.5m. That doesn't

IGC looks good in mezzanine niche

Intermediate Capital Group provides so-called mezzanine finance for management buyouts – the bit of funding that comes between relatively cheap bank debt and expensive venture capital equity funding.

If things go wrong, ICG ranks before shareholders and trade creditors but after the banks for repayment. It is rewarded for that level of risk with a higher coupon on the debt and often an equity kicker as well in the event of a flotation or takeover. This is a growing niche and ICG is the leading independent offering it.

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PEOPLE & BUSINESS

JOHN WILLCOCK



If you worked for a company called Genus and somebody at a party asked you what your business consisted of, you would be able to say: "The supply of dairy and beef semen and a range of complementary products, the provision of artificial insemination, farm consultancy and other services to dairy and beef farmers."

It must be worth almost as much as the salary. Genus, spun out of the old Milk Marketing Board seven years ago, has received an "indicative offer" from Breeding Services, a bid consortium comprising Alchemie Partners and a management team.

So far Genus's board has given the offer the cold shoulder. Breeding Services still hopes to be able to put the benefits of the bid to Genus's 29,000 farmer-shareholders.

The bidder's management team includes Dr Tony Callow, managing director of Agri-Livestock Consultants and a former director of Premier Breeders, and Alex Park, managing director of Cheshire Breeding Services. I'm sure any talks will be fruitful.

Around 20 employees of MeesPierson's equity desk in London are looking for new

jobs after being told last Thursday that the operation will close at the end of October.

The good news is that MeesPierson, Holland's oldest merchant bank, is about to clinch the sale of another London subsidiary, stockbroker Shaw & Co, to Charles Stanley, thus saving 80 jobs. But the bank is having less luck finding a joint venture partner for its 100-strong City derivatives business MPD.

At the moment MeesPierson employs around 500 people in London. It has embarked on a "strategic focus" programme following its sale to Belgian insurer Fortis by the previous owners, Dutch bank ABN Amro, six months ago.

About 20 people work for the equity operation, which used to be called London Equities, and was originally formed by ex-employees of Kitcat and Aitken. A MeesPierson spokesman in Amsterdam says it has looked hard to find a joint venture partner or buyer for the business, but "we might have to close it." The boys were told last Thursday to get their o's out.

On the search for a partner for the derivatives operation, the spokesman says:

"We haven't found any partners yet. Hopefully we will be successful."

The Dutch certainly like doing things by the book. One former employee says that the boys at MeesPierson are not allowed to use mobile telephones inside the office. Why ever not?

How intriguing. Hays Plc subsidiary Hays Business Services has just lost its managing director and finance director, but is refusing to comment on the matter. Managing director Peter Dobson and his finance deputy left the operation in Stockwell, south London, a couple of weeks ago. When I rang the company's head office in Guilford, Surrey, yesterday they said they had no comment to make, but would get back to me. Watch this space.

As I forecast last week, Richard Nichols has been elected as the next Lord Mayor of London. On 7 November he will succeed Sir Roger Cook to become the Corporation's 670th Lord Mayor.

I also wrote that Mr Nichols was originally elected as an Alderman to the

Candlewick ward of the City (Cannon Street) in 1984 with just seven votes, beating Lord Levene, the former Canary Wharf boss, who got six.

It may be the last election under the present system before the Corporation introduces wide-ranging reforms to increase the number of voters. The ancient body needs to head off threats from the Labour Government to merge it with a neighbouring borough.

The head of the Royal Academy of Music has been appointed to City law firm Beachcroft Stanleys as chief executive.

Sadly this does not mean Brahms for barristers and cellists in the chambers. Patrick Maddams is a professional manager who became the Academy's first managing director in 1991. Before that he was managing director of the distinctly unsuccesful BTR subsidiary Dunlop Textiles.

Mr Maddams, 46, succeeds James Kennedy, who also came from outside the legal profession and is retiring after 10 years in the post.

Despite his years in management Mr

Maddams still has some ideals. He says: "Traditionally, law firms have always been very secretive of how their businesses are run. I want our clients to see us as an open and innovative practice..." An open law firm? That'll be the day.

Insurance companies love trying to scare people into taking out cover for everything from motor accidents to impregnation by aliens. Zurich Municipal has come up with a novel approach. It is warning of "Troubled waters for Boozie Cruisers."

"Thousands of people taking advantage of cheaper low season ferry tickets to stock up in French supermarkets could be prime targets for thieves," it drons. "Yet many day trippers are crossing the channel unaware that if their bulk shop is stolen from their car, their motor insurer is unlikely to provide sufficient compensation." It says a car full of British shoppers will spend over £400 on booze and food, while most policies only provide cover of up to £100. Personally, if I discovered that amount of booze had been nicked, I would have only one response: Head for the nearest bar.

25/BUSINESS

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Embassy raises standard

Sheikh Mohammed's Embassy looked very impressive in winning the Cheveley Park Stakes yesterday and, as Richard Edmondson reports from Newmarket, probably earned herself a place in the sun this winter.

To ensure he won the Cheveley Park Stakes here yesterday, Sheikh Mohammed bought the opposition. He need not have bothered.

Cape Verdi, one of three fillies the Sheikh purchased from Robert Sangster for the Godolphin harem, could finish only fourth as the favourite for the Group One contest as Embassy burned away from her field in the Sheikh's personal maroon and white livery.

Dubai's crown prince said he would be discussing with the winning trainer the possibility of seconding Embassy to the Emirates and Godolphin this winter, which means David

Loder was probably practising his genuflection in front of the mirror last night. Embassy looked mightily good.

Sangster has sold smashing horses, such as Carnegie and Balanchine, to the Sheikh in the past and said he could not refuse an offer for this current batch, which also includes the Derby prospect, City Honours. If there is a loser in this transaction, it is Sangster's trainer, Peter Chapple-Hyam, who administers a Manton yard that is increasingly becoming a prep school polishing youngsters for other establishments.

The trainer said he was disappointed with Cape Verdi's performance yesterday but that she would be a transformed animal when tried over a mile on fast ground. "She will be back here next year in the winners' enclosure after the 1,000 Guineas," he said.

There was nothing substantial about Cape Verdi yesterday as the field trotted the paddock in drizzle under grey skies. Embassy, on the other hand, displayed one of

those backside you hope never to see coming down the aircraft aisle when there is an adjacent empty seat.

Loder's filly did not move with any great conviction for much of the six-furlong contest, however, as she was caught on the inside, in a cage of runners. When Kieren Fallon detected a fissure, though, the response

was to come down the rail and she was having to keep her to her work and in terms of getting a mile that's ideal.

Loder gave much of the credit for this victory to Embassy's work rider, Robert Edmondson, the former champion apprentice. This was hardly surprising as the jockey comes from a most noble family.

The money event of the day, the Tattersalls Houghton Sales Stakes, went to Roger Charlton, who earned a working man's salary in the sub-90 seconds it took to run the bonus race. The Backhampton trainer saddled the first and second, Tamarisk and Sapphire Ring, who earned over £300,000 between them. Roger looked rather pleased.

Tamarisk, in particular, looked a colt with other considerable paydays ahead of him and Charlton's first task will be to persuade his owners to release the £15,000 it will take to supplement the horse for the Dewhurst Stakes. "He wasn't entered originally because we just aimed to run in this race

from the moment he was bought," the trainer said. "He should stay a mile so obviously we will aim at the Guineas and we can dream through the winter. I think he's a proper horse."

"I needed this because I've had a lot of scrubbies running at Catterick," Sheikh Mohammed is not interested in those.

From 2,000 GUINEAS: Cape Verdi 1 (Dagger), King Of Kings 2 (Kieren Fallon), Loder's filly 3 (Robert Edmondson), 4 (Dagger), 5 (Kieren Fallon), 6 (Dagger), 7 (Kieren Fallon), 8 (Dagger), 9 (Kieren Fallon), 10 (Dagger), 11 (Kieren Fallon), 12 (Dagger), 13 (Kieren Fallon), 14 (Dagger), 15 (Kieren Fallon), 16 (Dagger), 17 (Kieren Fallon), 18 (Dagger), 19 (Kieren Fallon), 20 (Dagger), 21 (Kieren Fallon), 22 (Dagger), 23 (Kieren Fallon), 24 (Dagger), 25 (Kieren Fallon), 26 (Dagger), 27 (Kieren Fallon), 28 (Dagger), 29 (Kieren Fallon), 30 (Dagger), 31 (Kieren Fallon), 32 (Dagger), 33 (Kieren Fallon), 34 (Dagger), 35 (Kieren Fallon), 36 (Dagger), 37 (Kieren Fallon), 38 (Dagger), 39 (Kieren Fallon), 40 (Dagger), 41 (Kieren Fallon), 42 (Dagger), 43 (Kieren Fallon), 44 (Dagger), 45 (Kieren Fallon), 46 (Dagger), 47 (Kieren Fallon), 48 (Dagger), 49 (Kieren Fallon), 50 (Dagger), 51 (Kieren Fallon), 52 (Dagger), 53 (Kieren Fallon), 54 (Dagger), 55 (Kieren Fallon), 56 (Dagger), 57 (Kieren Fallon), 58 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Defence, midfield and attack are the only worries for Ferguson

Injury looks likely to deprive Manchester United of their captain, Roy Keane, against Juventus at Old Trafford tonight. Glenn Moore believes his absence could be crucial.

Manchester United learned long ago that to borrow a phrase from down the East Lancs Road, "money can't buy love". Yesterday, like many a millionaire, they were reminded that it cannot buy health and luck either. Barely hours after the club revealed record profits of £27m last year, United were forced to admit that their inspirational captain, Roy Keane, is very unlikely to play

in tonight's Champions' League match against Juventus at Old Trafford.

Keane looks to have paid a heavy price for apparently aiming a kick at Alf Inge Haland of Leeds on Saturday. Having fallen awkwardly, his right knee has become swollen and, according to his manager, Alex Ferguson, "he is very doubtful". The feeling is he is more than doubtful and there are fears that the injury could be serious.

The timing could hardly be worse. United did achieve some significant results without Keane last season, but not against teams with the quality of Juventus. Although Ferguson's options are increased by the return to fitness of Nicky Butt and Ryan Giggs they are likely to be short of experience for the crucial midfield contest with Zine-

dine Zidane and Didier Deschamps. Ronnie Johnsen, having only completed his first 36 minutes' action this season as a substitute at Leeds, is unlikely to start.

"It is a blow, but not a massive blow," Ferguson insisted. "We have other players who can come in and we have won without him before. It will be important to get the midfield right. Juventus are very powerful."

This is not United's only problem area. Injuries have prevented Ferguson finding an established attacking partnership; Andy Cole, Teddy Sheringham, Ole Gunnar Solskjaer, Paul Scholes and Jordi Cruyff have all been tried. "We have not had continuity," Ferguson said. "Teddy would have liked to have been able to play regularly with someone. His injury came at a

bad time. We have to score tomorrow. If we do we have a great chance."

Having conceded just four goals all season, you would have thought Ferguson would at least feel consoled by the form of his defence. Not at all. "We've made a few errors there recently," he said.

Not that Juventus are in perfect shape. Angelo Di Livio is suspended and they arrive fresh from a fortunate draw at Sampdoria. They remain, however, the ultimate test for United. Borussia Dortmund defeated the Italian champions in last year's European Cup final but, for Ferguson, Juventus are still Europe's best. "We are underdogs which is unusual but fair enough," Ferguson said. "They are at the level we want to reach. That's my ambition. It's remarkable how Marcello Lippi

keeps changing his forwards. Two years ago he won the European Cup, then sold his strikers at a profit and bought new ones. Last year he reached the final and won the Italian league and sold his strikers at a profit. This year he's got two more good ones. My chairman would love him."

The heirs to Ravanelli and Viali, and Vieri and Boksic, are Alessandro Del Piero and Filippo Inzaghi. "He's replaced two powerful strikers with two very quick ones," Ferguson added.

The Italians are not short of return compliments. "They are the supreme example of English football and are probably the most creative side in England," Lippi said. "Old Trafford is a wonderful stadium and the atmosphere will be electric."

Ciro Ferrara, the Italian international centre-half, added: "They will miss Eric Cantona, but we must not forget he was supported by a great team. Manchester United are superb on the wings with great forwards, especially Sheringham. Though I could be marking him in Rome, I think between Juventus and Italy don't work. Basically they are very different teams."

All the same, it would be a considerable lift if United could strike a pre-emptive blow for England.

Manchester United (probable): Schuster, Bagg, Sander, Sander, Crespo, Gracia, Galatasaray (probable): Kilmoe, Davis, Aloy, Korkmaz, Ural, Popescu, Parbo, Kilmoe, Igit, Sukur, Ila.

United to launch TV channel, page 23

Buckley hoping Grimsby's best side wins out

Alan Buckley takes his Jekyll and Hyde side Grimsby to Sheffield Wednesday tonight not knowing which character will emerge.

Buckley has been left perplexed by the Mariners' inconsistency this season, particularly after outplaying David Pleat's team at Blundell Park two weeks ago for a 2-0 win in the Coca-Cola Cup second round, first leg.

Grimsby then suffered a home defeat against Millwall, followed by Saturday's 1-0 success at Bournemouth - only their second win in the Second Division this season to leave them in 20th place.

Buckley is convinced his side can give Wednesday a run for their money in the return at Hillsborough to set up a third-round home tie against the holders, Leicester.

The Town boss, in his second managerial spell with the club after six years at the helm between 1988 and 1994, said: "We had a terrific result in the first game. I'm sure David Pleat would acknowledge we deserved it."

"I know we can't play any better than we did then, but I just hope we can achieve that same level again. But they've got to chase the game, so we are expecting a bit of a blitz."

"We will set our stall out to play well, although we are very inconsistent at the moment. It doesn't worry me but it can be a bit difficult to understand."

Peter Handyside is Buckley's main injury doubt with badly bruised ribs, while John McDermott and Steve Livingstone are expected to play despite ankle and knee problems respectively.

Pleat, under pressure after Wednesday's poor start to the season, is hoping his side can build on Saturday's 2-2 draw at Aston Villa.

"I just hope we can continue to work and improve and pass the ball like we did on Saturday, because I want people to do well. If they can do that then I'll be delighted."

Andy Booth and Graham Hyde are still sidelined, while Kevin Pressman, Peter Atherton, Patrick Blondeau and David Hirst remain doubtful.

Dave Linighan, Blackpool's captain, faces another late fitness test as his side aim to complete their Coca-Cola Cup giant-killing of Coventry City.

Linighan played with a sore ankle two weeks ago to score the only goal of the first leg at Bloomfield Road and now the 32-year-old centre-back is doubtful after he broke his nose against Southend at the weekend.

The Coventry midfielder Paul Telfer looks certain to miss out with an ankle injury suffered at Blackburn on Sunday.

Derby take a 1-0 lead into their second leg against Southend at Pride Park, but their manager, Jim Smith, is taking nothing for granted.

"We all tend to be a little bit apprehensive by nature as managers and we don't want to say that we will have no problems because football is not always like that," he said.

Derby bring in Dean Sturridge and Aljosa Asanovic to sharpen their match fitness and rest their Italian pair Stefano Eranio and Francesco Baiano.

Everton's task against Southampton at Goodison Park looks easy as they lead 1-0 from the first leg, but their manager, Howard Kendall, urged caution.

"I've selected many good sides on paper, but it all depends on how they play when they go out there," he said. "It's important that we go out with a professional attitude."

Duncan Ferguson is still out with a calf problem so Nick Barry deputises while Tony Thomas replaces Earl Barrett in defence.



Great expectations: Valery Lobanovsky, the man charged with putting Dynamo Kiev back on the European football map

Photograph: Popperfoto

Lobanovsky the man to make Dynamo dynamic again

The task Newcastle United face today could hardly be more daunting. Not only do they tackle a confident Dynamo Kiev side led by Ukraine's equivalent of Alan Shearer, but, as Olaf Rosmussen reveals, a crowd of 100,000 and the will of a nation desperate to make its mark after centuries in Russia's shadow.

Thirty years ago, Dynamo Kiev made their European Cup debut against Celtic, then managed by the legendary Jock Stein. The almost unknown team from the Soviet Union caused a sensation by knocking out the cup holders, beating them 2-1 in Glasgow and drawing 1-1 in Kiev, capital of Ukraine.

Back in the Sixties, Dynamo were on a high as they became not only the first non-Russian team to win the Soviet League title, but also the league and cup double. Winning three league titles in succession, as they did from 1967-69, had been unthinkable in a league dominated by Russian sides.

The victory over Celtic was a glorious moment for a club who had been made famous by tragedy - the "Match of

Death", which took place in German-occupied Kiev in 1942. Dynamo players were challenged to play a German Luftwaffe team, and despite threats and the desire of the German airmen to prove themselves the better side, Dynamo won. All the Ukrainian players were executed. Today, at the side of the cosy, 20,000-capacity Dynamo Kiev stadium in the centre of the city, there is a monument to the players who died.

After the war, Dynamo rose again to win 13 Soviet League titles, and the European Cup-Winners' Cup in 1975 and 1986. They have also twice reached the European Cup semi-finals. Having dominated Ukrainian football since the first independent championships were held in 1992, they are desper-

ate to return to the heady days of European success.

Although there were some moments to savour, namely the 3-1 defeat of visiting Barcelona in 1993 while down to 10 men, this decade saw Dynamo in disgrace.

Their first game in the 1995 Champions' League against Panathinaikos saw two Dynamo officials attempt to bribe the referee. UEFA banned the duo for life and threw Dynamo out of the competition.

Now, however, things seem to be going Dynamo's way. The architect of their success in the Seventies and Eighties was coach Valeri Lobanovsky, who won lasting adulation in his homeland as the Ukrainian who fought the big Russian bear on the football pitch.

The 58-year-old Lobanovsky, who nevertheless coached the Soviet Union in 1986 World Cup in Mexico, returned home in January after seven years coaching the UAE and Kuwait national teams.

In a twist on a title bestowed on the former Soviet leader Lenin, he was described as "the coach for all times and all nations" during a packed celebration of the club's achievements in Kiev's Independence Square last weekend.

"We dream of victory in the Champions' League - it's within our power to bring the Cup to Kiev," the Dynamo president, Hryhory Surkis, told an ecstatic crowd of 10,000.

Dynamo have a strong presence in the Ukrainian team, who have made their presence

felt in Northern Ireland's World Cup qualifying group. Newcastle could find seven home internationals lining up against them in the renamed Olimpijski stadium, which the club hire for big European matches.

Unusually for an eastern European club, Dynamo have managed to keep their best talent. The 21-year-old striker Andriy Shevchenko - who was likened by Brian Hamilton, the Northern Ireland manager to a young Alan Shearer - turned down a £10.8m bid from Milan. Yuri Maximov and Serhiy Rebrov would also not look out of place at a major European club.

They stay because Surkis looks after his players. "They are not deprived of earning big money," he said. They are also passionate about winning with a Ukrainian club and thereby putting their proud and recently independent country of 51 million on the map.

"For me," the striker Rebrov, said, "the challenge is to beat the big Western guns while playing for my Ukrainian club."

Shevchenko agreed. "Dynamo have to bring joy and pride back to Ukrainians," he said.

Newcastle kicked off their Champions' League campaign with a 3-2 home win against Barcelona, while Dynamo overcame PSV Eindhoven 3-1. Tonight there is everything to play for and Kiev will be no place for chickens.

Chicken Kiev for wary Newcastle

Newcastle arrived in Kiev last night with everything including the kitchen sink. The Magpies, who play Dynamo Kiev in the Champions' League tonight, were accompanied by their catering manager, Robin Buchanan, two chefs and 1,850 kilos of food.

And unlike their last European trip to Zagreb when Buchanan only supervised the catering, this time chef John Blackmore and Mick Bibby plan to cook everything themselves for United's 70-strong

party of players, staff and directors.

Buchanan said: "All the players have specific diets. We are determined there will be no problems."

The Newcastle captain, Rob Lee, seems to be winning his fitness battle after a test on his thigh strain during training at the daunting 100,000 all-seater Olympic Stadium last night. But the Newcastle manager, Kenny Dalglish, refused to say whether or not Lee would start the Group C tie.

Dalglish said that while the injured Stuart Pearce and Alessandro Pistone had travelled he would "wait and see how they are a little later."

But Faustino Asprilla, a bat-trick hero against Barcelona, will be fit to play after recovering from illness. "Tino has trained this last couple of days and is OK," confirmed Dalglish.

Contemplating the game, he said: "We're here to get as much from the game as we can but nothing conclusive will come from the night's games."

Dutch coaches under pressure in crucial 'Group of Death' meeting

The favourites in Group C of the Champions' League, Barcelona and PSV Eindhoven, both lost their first matches. They meet tonight desperate to kick-start their campaign.

Louis van Gaal hopes to prove himself wrong tonight by leading Barcelona to a much-needed Champions' League win over PSV Eindhoven after their 3-2 setback against a Faustino Asprilla inspired Newcastle.

The Barcelona coach, who thinks his Dutch compatriots,

PSV, are the best side in Group C, knows both teams need a win to keep alive their hopes of qualifying from the so-called "Group of Death".

PSV, former European Cup holders like Barcelona, also lost their opening game, slumping to a 3-1 defeat at home to the Ukrainian team, Dynamo Kiev.

"PSV are better than Barcelona," Van Gaal said. "They've been playing together for over a year."

Van Gaal thinks his side, who have a 100 per cent record in the Spanish league, have improved since their defeat at Newcastle.

"We've made progress since the first game but concentrating for 90 minutes is very dif-

ficult," he said. Van Gaal will have to wait for fitness tests on midfield general Josep Guardiola and the Brazilian striker Sonny Anderson.

One man certain not to play is Bulgarian striker Hristo Stolev, who has had disagreements with the coach in recent weeks.

Despite his high opinion of his opponents, Van Gaal is optimistic about Barcelona's chances of victory. "Their form [PSV] isn't the best and because of that they are not favourites," he said.

Van Gaal was clearly not referring to PSV's emphatic 6-0 win at Volendam on Sunday, which included two second-half strikes by Luc Nilis.

But the PSV coach, Dick Advocaat, was guarded about the impact of that result. "It helps morale but the Champions' League is something else," Advocaat said. "Only victory will do against Barcelona. And that's what we've come for."

PSV will be without injured midfielders Marc Degryse and Igor Demo, striker Eidur Gudjohnsen and defender Stan Valdez, who hurt his shoulder a week ago after he fell off his mountain bike.

The last meeting between the two sides gave another Dutchman, Johan Cruyff, his last big win in eight years as Barcelona coach.

In March 1996 the

Spaniards were struggling before a superb individual goal by defender Sergi Barjuan earned them a place in the UEFA Cup semi-finals.

"I'd love to be able to do it again but it will be difficult," Sergi said. "A defeat would leave the losing team practically out of it... and would provoke a lot of consequences."

Advocaat and Van Gaal are only too aware of the kind of consequences an early exit from the Champions' League can have on the job of a manager.

BARCELONA (probable): Raul Hago, Sergi Barjuan, Michael Rodriguez, Miguel Angel Nadal, Albert Celades, Luis Enrique, Juan de la Peña, Guillermo Amor, Rivaldo, Luis Figo, Juan Pizzi.

PSV: to be announced

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FOOTBALL

Scottish sponsors decide to pull out

Bell's, the sponsors of the Scottish League, will not renew their agreement when it expires at the end of the season.

Ken Gault says the news leaves the game north of the border in disarray.

Scotland's Premier Division clubs are hopeful there will be a positive outcome from talks with the Scottish League management committee today in the wake of the announcement by Bell's yesterday that the firm will not be renewing their sponsorship of the domestic league at the end of the season.

Scotland's top 10 clubs are planning to break away from the league and will outline their proposals at Hampden Park.

However, there is widespread anxiety about funding among the 30 clubs outside the top flight after the decision by Bell's to pull out.

The Hibernian chairman, Lex Gold, spokesman for the Premier Division clubs, tried to allay their fears yesterday. "Wednesday's meeting presents a real opportunity to end the current uncertainty and we expect to answer any outstanding queries," he said.

"We are keen to take forward our proposals, which will benefit Scottish football as a whole, in a spirit of co-operation and have the new arrangements in place for the start of next season."

"It is clear that the status quo will continue to see a de-

cline in the standards of the game in Scotland. Our plans have been developed to ensure that additional revenue comes in to benefit the game."

Gold added: "We have deliberately not approached potential sponsors while we are involved in discussions with other clubs, but we have already received unsolicited inquiries from two organisations. They are excited about the possibilities our proposals present and are keen to discuss potential sponsorship."

"One of those made it clear that they are examining the possibility of sponsoring not only the Scottish Premiership but also those divisions which continue to be run by the Scottish League. The initial sums mentioned are of a significant nature, underlining our commitment to bring more money into Scottish football."

Inverness Caledonian Thistle and Ross County have been with Bell's all the way after joining the league in 1994.

The Inverness secretary, Jim Falconer, said: "We are disappointed Bell's are withdrawing their support as they have been good supporters of this club and helped our progress. But I suppose their stance is understandable, considering all this talk of a breakaway league."

"The Premier Division clubs have already indicated they have a potential sponsor and that money will filter through the leagues. Obviously we hope this comes to fruition."

Ewen Cameron, secretary of Alloa, is urging the breakaway group to confirm their sponsor as a matter of urgency and said: "The fact that Bell's are withdrawing their support at the end

of the season is a matter of great concern. We have heard talk that the Premier Division clubs have a potential sponsor but it is all a bit vague."

"We all have budgets to meet and need to work on them at the turn of the year. It is not a job that can be left to the last week of the season."

Andy Neal, consumer marketing director of United Distillers UK, the parent company of Bell's, admitted they had withdrawn their support because of the uncertainty surrounding Scottish football.

"The company had been close to agreeing a way ahead for the sponsorship with league secretary Peter Donald," he said. "But the announcement and follow-up news conferences, with regard to the proposed breakaway, have left it unclear exactly what we would be sponsoring."

"Major organisations such as our own with clear long-term strategies and plans cannot, and will not, commit millions of pounds to projects which do not have similar consistency in direction. As United Distillers is finalising its five-year investment plans now, we cannot commit to Scottish football when its future is so unclear."

Neal added: "Our views on the future of the game were sought as part of the Deloitte Touche report but no discussions have taken place. United Distillers, like the Scottish League, only learned of their intentions at the September 9 news conference. They have not outlined their proposals to us or discussed potential sponsorship. We would have expected a call. We would have done it differently."



Fabrizio Ravanelli trains for the first time yesterday with his new club, Olympique Marseilles, shadowed by team-mate Hamada Jambay. The 28-year-old former Middlesbrough and Juventus striker last week cost the French club £5.35m. Photograph: Florian Lauenette/AP

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No. 3418, Wednesday 1 October By Aquila Tuesday's Solution

ACROSS

1 Erratic power-yacht breaks down (6)

4 With last notes missing, score flung about in contempt (8)

10 Where one might see rainbow, from beginning to end (5-4)

11 Something V-shaped displayed in nick (5)

12 Piped music taking lead in choir, perhaps (7)

13 Impressive, elderly woman having to bet on party (7)

14 Last character in ring, game but wobbly? (5)

15 Opening pace of a heavy round (8)

18 Expedient in Goodwood, say, having lost account? (8)

20 New Oasis, a musical alternative (5)

23 Musical setting of tin soldiers at the double (7)

25 Emigre' umpire taking centre-court? Golly! (7)

26 A Rufus-Chester, we hear (5)

27 Turning sour, mischievous kids become us in a way (9)

28 Proper long table for one who has a second helping (8)

29 King named in authenticated war diaries (6)

DOWN

1 Take in work dishonestly pre-arranged? (3-2-3)

2 Hot water, some say, for heartache (7)

3 Passionate on grass at job-centre — delicate matter! (3-6)

5 The slips in play? (6,2,6)

6 Soldiers taking on advanced repair (5)

7 Listlessness? Fellow with malarial fever has to hold it back (7)

8 City head-office in real trouble (6)

9 Would one be so insensitive, coming out of a madhouse crypt? (14)

16 Battle area of ground-to-air missiles? (9)

17 Ace dress design bugged (8)

19 Honour England's openers, superb in the follow-on (7)

21 Spanish town goes, strangely, over Roman road (7)

22 Bill given a clear tick (6)

24 Year's events recorded by royal governess beginning lessons (5)

MOTOR RACING

No fall-out for the Schumacher family

When Ralf Schumacher crashed into Michael at the Luxembourg Grand Prix on Sunday, he almost certainly ended his brother's of winning the Formula One world championship this season. But the two are still speaking.

Ralf Schumacher yesterday insisted there had been no family falling-out after he shunted brother Michael out of the Luxembourg Grand Prix.

The collision may have cost the two-time champion his chance of the title this year as Jacques Villeneuve won to take a nine-point lead in the drivers' standings.

Ralf said: "It's doubly bitter for him but he doesn't blame me, and why should he?" The Jordan driver added that he did not believe he should say sorry.

"There's no reason to do so. There were three of us involved in that accident — Giancarlo Fisichella, Michael and me. It was just one of those things. I didn't have a chance. Fisichella nudged my rear wheel and I went over Michael. If

everybody had been paying attention nothing would have happened."

"What should I do, brake simply because I'm Michael's brother? I have to drive my own race. I'm not the third Ferrari driver."

Alain Prost hired a member of Renault yesterday to develop his Formula One cars next year. Prost said that Bernard Dudot will become technical director after the end of this season.

Dudot is currently with Renault, guiding the Williams and Benetton teams. He helped the teams to the world

constructors championships between 1992 and 1996 with Williams winning four and Benetton one.

"Due to his vast experience in automobile competition, including 20 years in Formula One, Bernard gives us a certain added value," Prost said.

Williams-Renault is in a substantial lead in this year's standings and Renault engines took the top four places at Luxembourg.

Renault is dropping out of Formula One this year and Prost will receive engines from another French carmaker.

Peugeot, in 1998. The former world champion took over the ailing Ligier team this year and had to use Mugen-Honda engines in 1997.

The Prost team is currently sixth in the constructors standings and has Olivier Panis in ninth in the driver's standings. At the Austrian Grand Prix Jarno Trulli, substituting for Panis at the time, was in the lead for more than half the race before an engine failure.

The Japanese Grand Prix is the next race on 12 October, with the final race of the season, the Grand Prix of Europe, a fortnight later in Jerez.

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